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TOPOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL
SKETCHES
OF THE
TOWN OF LEICESTER,
IN THE
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS:
FURNISHED FOR THE
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BY EMORY WASHBURN, ESQ.

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HISTORY OF LEICESTER.

IN attempting a work like the history of any town in the interior of New England, great difficulties are to be encountered. The records of many are so imperfect, that they often serve rather to perplex, than enlighten the enquirer. Traditions have often become too vague and uncertain to be relied on with any degree of confidence, and the threads by which the labyrinth of events is to be traced, are often broken, or irrecoverably lost.

Notwithstanding these difficulties and discouragements, we have attempted to give, somewhat fully, the description and historical memoranda of the town of Leicester.

We have been prompted to this, more from feelings of local interest and attachment, than from any hope of literary reputation, or, much less, of profit. The graves of our fathers are here; and we felt a curiosity to trace, not only their histories, but also those of all who were their cotemporaries, and acted or suffered with them. We felt desirous of snatching from oblivion, events connected with the history of our country, and preserving the names of men whose merits deserve a place on its pages. We have met with obstacles in accomplishing our task, which we could not surmount, and have often been compelled to present extremely imperfect sketches where justice seemed to require a complete detail. We acknowledge ourselves indebted for many favors in performing the work proposed. Every one whose age gave him a knowledge of events previous to our own day, has been pretty liberally taxed

for the materials of this work. We have also to acknowledge ourselves under obligations to H. G. Henshaw, Esq. for the use of the valuable papers of the late Col. Wm. Henshaw.

We cannot better acknowledge the aid received from the Hon. Edward D. Bangs, Esq. Secretary of the Commonwealth, than by transcribing the following letter politely forwarded in answer to enquiries made for information respecting the incorporation of the town of Leicester. "Agreeably to your request, I have examined into the particulars which were wanted respecting Leicester. It appears, as was the case with most towns at that period, that there never was a formal act of Incorporation. The votes by which the settlement was constituted a town, and received its name of Leicester, I have copied, and now transmit to you. In June, 1714, a survey and plan of the town was reported to the General Court by John Chandler, Esq. was accepted, and is on file. I have looked for the old Indian deed, mentioned in the vote of the General Court, but it is not to be found. My copy is exactly correct, unless it should be the Indian names, which it is very difficult to decypher. I believe, however, they are right, or nearly so."

Extract from General Court records, under date of February 15, 1713. "The following order passed; in the House of Representatives, read and concurred: viz. Upon reading a petition of Joshua Lamb, Richard Draper, Samuel Ruggles, Benjamin Tucker, and others, setting forth, that upon the twenty seventh day of January, 1686, for a valuable consideration therefor paid, they purchased of Philip Traye,* and Monckhue,* his wife, John Wanpom,* and Wawonnow,* his wife, and other Indians, the heirs of Ooras-hoe,* the original Sachem of a place, Towtaid, lying near Worcester, a certain tract of land, containing eight miles square, abutting, southerly on the land which the Governor lately purchased of the Indians, and westerly, the most southerly corner, upon a little pond, called Paupogquincog*; then to a little hill, called Wehapekatonnuc*; and from thence to a little hill, called Aspompok*; and so then easterly, upon a line, until it came against Worcester bounds, and joins unto their bounds; as may be seen more at large by the original deed, executed by the said Indians Proprietors, and acknowledged before the Hon. William Stoughton, Esq. praying confirmation of the said tract of land to them and their associates, that they may be encouraged to proceed forthwith to settle the

* The Indian names designated by an asterisk are difficult to be decyphered, and may not be copied with perfect accuracy.

same with inhabitants, under such directions and reservations as shall be thought meet;

Ordered, That the Prayer of the Petitioners be granted; Provided, that within seven years time, fifty families settle themselves in as defensible and regular a way as the circumstances of the place will allow, on part of the said land; and that a sufficient quantity thereof be reserved for the use of a Gospel ministry there, and a school; Provided also, that this interfere with no former grant, and this grant shall not exceed the quantity of eight miles square. The town to be named Leicester, and to belong to the County of Middlesex.

Consented to :

J. DUDLEY.

“A true Copy from the proceedings of Council, under date of February 15, 1713, as recorded in Vol. 8, of General Court Records, pages 351-352. Attest,

EDWARD D. BANGS, *Sec'y*
of the Commonwealth.”

We are the more gratified in having been favored with the foregoing copy of the record, as we are thus able to correct some errors in dates, into which Mr. Whitney has fallen, in his history of this town. The deed from the Indians we have not been able to find, and as the original grantees never, we believe, removed here, it probably never formed any part of the records of the town.

This tract, thus granted, had been called by the English, who had visited it, “Strawberry Hill,” previous to the act of the General Court, above recited.

The particular boundaries of the town were fixed by a special act of the General Court, in January, 1714.*

The proprietors of the township held a meeting, in Boston, on the 23d February, 1713, to take measures to secure their grant, and voted for this purpose to give the eastern half of the town to the first fifty families which should settle there, within the period specified by the act. And in 1722, they again met and authorized Col. Joshua Lamb,† Samuel Green, Nathaniel Kanney, and

* Whitney.

† Col. Joshua Lamb was an enterprising and wealthy citizen, of Roxbury. He was largely interested in the unincorporated lands of the state. He, together with others belonging to Roxbury, were at one time proprietors of what is now Hardwick, which, for many years was called after him, *Lambstown*. He never removed to Leicester, but his descendants have resided in Spencer, and one of them, bearing the same name, is at present one of the Selectmen of Leicester.

Samuel Tyler, to execute deeds to the families who had removed to the town, and a deed was accordingly executed on the 8th day of January, 1722, to John Stebbins, and forty six others, which deed is said to be recorded in the Registry of Deeds, for the County of Middlesex, to which county this town then belonged—Book 29, page 329. The measure of the town proved to be what surveyors call “large,” and though the western half of it was set off, in 1753, into a town, by the name of Spencer, and two miles in width of its northern part taken off, in 1765, to constitute a part of Paxton, and about 2500 acres again taken off from its southeastern corner, to form a part of the town of Ward, it still contains 14,426 acres.

Many of the original proprietors of the town were the ancestors of families, bearing the same name, now residing here, and among the most respectable in town, some of whose names we may hereafter have occasion to mention.*

BOUNDARIES.—Leicester is bounded, on the north by Paxton, the line dividing which towns runs east, two and one half degrees south, twelve hundred and six rods; east, by the town of Worcester, by a line running south, about fifteen degrees east, and thirteen hundred and eighty four and one half rods on Worcester; southeast by Ward, by a line running east, two degrees fifty minutes north, one hundred and fifty six rods, fifteen links, and north, thirty nine degrees forty five minutes east, two hundred and eighty eight rods, and north, thirty seven and one half degrees east, five hundred and eighty rods†; south, by Oxford north gore and Charlton, by a line running west, one and a quarter degrees north, seven hundred and twenty rods; and west, by Spencer, by a line running north, four degrees west, two thousand and thirty two rods. The town is seven miles from the Court house, in Worcester, in a direction a little south of west. It is forty five miles from Boston, and the same distance from Northampton.

FACE OF THE COUNTRY.—This town has been considered remark-

* Among these were Daniel Livermore, (who was the great-grandfather of the present Messrs. Daniel and Salem Livermore,) Joshua Henshaw, Samuel Green, Daniel Denny, David Henshaw, Ralph Earle, and Richard Southgate.

† A part of the line between Ward and Leicester is now in dispute. We give the lines according to a survey, taken in 1794, by vote of the town, by Reuben Swan and Timothy Sprague, and protracted by Mr. Peter Silvester, who has been long engaged as a surveyor in this town.

able for its hilly and uneven surface ; this opinion has arisen from the circumstance, that all the principal roads leading through it, have been made over the most considerable elevations of land, and give to the weary traveller the impression that the whole of its territory is of that character. The face of the town is, indeed, uneven, and lying upon the height of land between Boston and Connecticut river, it is quite elevated. Yet there are no very high hills, or abrupt elevations of land above the general surface of the country. Some of the most considerable of the hills have received names by custom and tradition, by which they are usually designated. That upon which the Congregational Meeting House is built, was originally called Strawberry hill, from the abundance of that fruit found there in the early settlement of the town. Another, in the east part of the town, a little north of the "county road," is known by the name of "Indian" or "Bald hill," on account of its having been cleared and planted by the Indians before the white men settled here. The hill about one mile west from the Meeting house, has been, for many years, known by the name of "Mount Pleasant."* It had, within a few years, an elegant house upon it, fitted up as a country seat, by Maj. James Swan, who has long been a state prisoner in France. The seat has now gone greatly to decay, but is still an interesting spot, on account of the extensive and beautiful prospect it enjoys.

Another hill, which is about half a mile north from the Meeting House, has been known by the name of "Carey's hill," from the earliest settlement of the town ; and derives its name from that of a hermit, who retired to this spot, long before it was settled by Europeans, and lived in a cave, which he dug in the hill. Who he was, and how much of his story is mere tradition, we are not able to determine. But the well from which he drew his water, the ditch by which he drained his cave, and the stones that helped to form his dwelling, are all visible there at this day. Moose hill is at the northwest corner, and Grass hill at the southwest corner of the town. The views from many of the hills in this town are extremely fine. That from the Mansion house, on the estate which has been in the Denny family since the settlement of the town, embraces nine or ten churches, besides a vast extent of beautiful and fertile country. This landscape has formed a subject for the

* It was first called Mount Pleasant by Lewis Allen, a singular man, who once owned the seat, afterwards Major Swan's. By his own direction, he was buried in his garden, where his tomb is yet visible.

pencil of a native artist, of very considerable merit and reputation, Mr. Ralph Earle,* who had resided many years in England, where he went, together with his brother, to cultivate the natural taste and genius they possessed. This landscape is a very creditable effort at painting of that kind.

SOIL, PRODUCTIONS, &c.—The soil of Leicester is generally deep, and of a strong kind; in its composition, clay rather predominates; and although, at first, wrought with some difficulty, it is capable of becoming fruitful and luxuriant, since it retains the fertilizing effect of proper cultivation for a considerable time. It is rather moist in some parts of the town, and better adapted to grass, which it produces in abundance, than grains; especially those which are called English grains. There are, however, many fine and productive farms in town, and nothing but a proper attention to agriculture is required, to elevate its character as an agricultural district. Mechanical business has, for years, been more productive of profit than agriculture, under any circumstances, could reasonably be expected to be; and in consequence of this, the agricultural interest has been neglected. Within our own recollection, some of the most productive lands at present, were little better than mere wastes, where the briars and bushes were the only productions of the soil.† We mention this circumstance to show, by the result of actual experiment, the capacities of the soil of the town, better than by any general description of its properties we could give. Garden vegetables thrive extremely well, and abundant crops of Indian corn and potatoes reward the labors of the husbandman: and in the north and east parts of the town there are many excellent orchards.

* Ralph, and James Earle, were grandsons of that Ralph Earle who was one of the original settlers of the town. Their father's name was Ralph, who lived in what is now Paxton, on the place owned by Mr. Joseph Penniman. Ralph was made a member of the Royal Academy, in London. Both he, and James, excelled as much in portrait painting, as in landscape and historical pieces. The "Falls of Niagara," by Ralph, among his largest works, has been admired as one of much merit. Towards the close of his life, his habits became irregular, and it was only at intervals, that his fine genius exhibited itself, and then, always to the delight of every one. He died at Lansinburgh, N. Y. and his brother James, at Charleston, S. C. Both left families, but only the son of Ralph, bearing the same name, inherited the peculiar genius of his ancestors.

† We cannot forbear noticing the great improvements which have recently been made in the lands near the village, by Mr. Alpheus Smith, Dr. Austin Flint, and others. Within a few years, the bushes entirely covered those fields which now produce so luxuriantly. A similar effect would result to most of the lands in town, by applying to them the same skill and persevering industry.

RIVERS, PONDS, &c.—This town is well watered, although there is no stream of any great magnitude flowing through it. The sources of several streams are within this town, which, taking different directions, pour its waters into the Atlantic by the Blackstone, the Thames, and the Connecticut. So slight are the barriers that separate the waters of some of these streams, that, about a quarter of a mile east of the Meeting House, where the county road passes through an apparently level meadow, the water that runs from the north side flows into the Blackstone, while that from the south runs into the Thames. And, in the west part of the town, about two miles from the Meeting House, the water running from the north side of the same road, flows into the Connecticut, and that from the south side into the Thames.

There are two natural ponds of considerable magnitude here ; one, containing about sixty acres, situate about a mile southeast of the Meeting House, called the Henshaw pond ; and the other, containing about eighty acres, called the North, or Shaw pond, in the northwest part of the town. The waters of the last pond are discharged at its southwest corner, and flow into the Chickapee river, forming one of its sources. There is, besides these, an artificial pond, in the southwest part of the town, called the “Burnt-coat,” containing about one hundred and twenty five acres. The courses of the streams, except that from north pond, are generally towards the southeast. One of these rises in a swamp between Leicester and Paxton, and, running south, about half a mile west of the Meeting House, where it is called the “Rawson Brook,”* it receives the waters that flow from the Burnt-coat pond, about five miles from its source ; thence, running southeasterly, it receives the waters of a brook coming in from the west, which has its source in Spencer, and afterwards receives the waters from the Henshaw pond, which flow from the northeast, at the Leicester and Saxon Factories, on the Stafford Turnpike, where it is called “French river ;” then running southwardly through Oxford, it forms a part of the Quineboag river, which empties into the Thames, at Norwich. This unites a great proportion of the waters that flow

* It derived this name from that of the owner of the farm through which it flowed, near the village, in Leicester. This was Edward Rawson, Esq. who removed here from Mendon. He was, for a long time, an officiating magistrate in the County, and filled many responsible public stations in the town. He died at the advanced age of 87, in 1807, leaving one daughter. A son of his was once a practising Physician here, but died, early in life, many years before the death of his father.

through the town. There is, however, a considerable stream that rises in Paxton, and flows through the east part of this town, into Ward, and there falls into the Blackstone. It is called "Kettle Brook," and affords sufficient water power to carry a grist mill and saw mill, two woollen factories, and another grist mill, built upon it in this town. From the nature of the country, these streams present fine privileges for the erection of mills, wherever they are of sufficient magnitude to ensure a permanent supply of water. These have been mostly occupied, and there are, at present, upon the French river, and its branches, within the limits of this town, five saw mills, two grist mills, one tannery, two scythe manufactories, one card manufactory, and one extensive woollen manufacturing establishment; while, on the stream flowing from the North Pond, there are a grist mill, and two wire manufactories.

POPULATION.—The population of this town has gradually increased in numbers from its settlement till the present time; but much more rapidly of late, than at any former period, on account of the manufacturing establishments, from which a large number find employment and support. We do not possess documents to ascertain the precise numbers of Inhabitants in the town at the different periods of its history; nor do we deem these very important facts. At its first settlement it contained fifty families. In 1786, there were 838 inhabitants, of whom, 24 were negroes. In 1810, there were 1181; in 1820, 1252, and, at present, the town probably contains 1500 inhabitants; of whom, there are not more than 3 or 4 blacks.* In 1781, there were 102 effective men on the rolls of the militia companies, and 49 conditional exempts, and at present, there are about 200 men borne on the rolls of these companies.†

The population, as we remarked, has increased rapidly in this town within the last few years, and promises to increase still far-

* The population of this town includes, at present, three ministers of the Gospel, two Physicians, two Preceptors of the Academy, and two practising Counsellors and Attorneys at Law. Of the Clergymen, we shall hereafter speak. The Physicians are Austin and Edward Flint, the latter a son of the former. The Attorneys at Law are the Hon. Nathaniel P. Denny, who was the first Attorney that established himself here, and Emory Washburn. Bradford Sumner, Esq. now of Boston, was in business here, as an Attorney at Law, from 1812 till his removal to Boston, in 1820.

† The first regimental review of the regiment to which these companies are attached, was, we believe, in 1785. The Regiment then included within its limits, the towns of Holden, Paxton, Spencer, Leicester, Ward and Worcester. It was divided in 1811, and Worcester and Holden taken from it. The regiment when reviewed in 1785 was commanded by Col. Seth Washburn. At present Lieut. Col. Stone of Ward is its commander.

ther, as new sources of wealth and support are opening to its inhabitants from time to time. A considerable proportion of this population derives its support, directly, or indirectly, from mechanical and manufacturing establishments, in which many of them are engaged.

MANUFACTURES, TRADE, &c.—The manufactures consist chiefly of cards and woollen cloths, although the more common establishments for the manufacture of leather, scythes, and the like, are by no means inconsiderable. There are five Blacksmith's shops, in which from eight to twelve men are employed in the ordinary business of that trade. There are from ten to twenty persons employed in manufacturing shoes for the ordinary consumption of the inhabitants of the town. In addition to these, there are two hatter's shops, two wheelwrights, two bookbinderies, one clock and watch maker, and one cabinet and chair manufactory.

There are five tanneries, in which leather to the amount of \$10,000, at least, is annually manufactured; and the amount of scythes annually made here is about \$2000.

The manufacture of cloths was commenced here by Mr. Samuel Watson, in 1814, about one and an half miles east of the Meeting House, on the "Kettle Brook." His establishment was small, and the business, soon afterwards, becoming rather unproductive, he was induced to part with the possession of it, for a few years, to Mr. James Anderton, a native of Lancashire, in England, an enterprising manufacturer, who, in the year 1821, purchased the privilege now occupied by the Leicester and Saxon factories, on the French River, where a small cotton factory had been previously erected. He then made over his interest on the Kettle Brook to a countryman of his, Thomas Bottomly, who occupied the same until 1825, when, having erected a new factory a short distance below the former one, he surrendered up the former estate to Mr. Watson again, who now occupies the same. The privilege on French River proving to be a valuable one, and Mr. Anderton, from an unfavorable turn of times, being unable to occupy the whole of it profitably, a company was formed, and incorporated in 1823, called the "Leicester Manufacturing Company," to whom he disposed of his interest in the privilege, and became a member of the corporation. This company afterwards united, and was incorporated, with the Saxon Factory, in Framingham, under the style of the Saxon and Leicester Factories. This establishment, in Leicester, consists at present of three factory buildings, the largest of

which is 100 by 40 feet, and 4 stories in height, a dye house, store, eleven dwelling houses, and is now constantly increasing. About 150 persons are employed in and around the establishment, and 100 yards of Broadcloths are manufactured per day. We have been more particular in describing these establishments, although, when compared with others in the country, they may seem unimportant, because they have grown up within a short period of time, and the success which has, on the whole, attended them, so clearly illustrates, what was once a somewhat doubtful problem, the policy of encouraging our domestic manufactures. We have also another object in view; to preserve the names of those, to whose skill and enterprise the town is indebted for a part of its prosperity.

The manufacture of cotton and wool machine, and hand cards, has been carried on extensively, for a much greater length of time than that of cloths. It was commenced here about the year 1785, by Mr. Edmund Snow, and amongst those most early engaged in its prosecution, was Mr. Pliny Earle, who still carries on the business. About the year 1790, Mr. Samuel Slater, the venerable originator of cotton factories in the United States, and to whom the country owes so much of its wealth and prosperity, having in vain endeavored to procure suitable cards for his machinery, in the principal cities of the union, applied to Mr. Earle, for the purpose of procuring some cards of him. Machine cards had, till then, been made in the manner called by manufacturers "plain." A part of the cards used on a machine is called "filleting," and this part it was desirable to have made, what is termed, "twilled." For this purpose, Mr. Earle was obliged to prick the whole of the filleting with two needles, inserted into a handle, in the manner of an awl. This process was extremely tedious; but Mr. Earle, at length, completed his undertaking, and furnished to Mr. Slater the cards by which the first cotton was wrought, that was spun by machinery in America. The difficulty with which he accomplished this engagement, led his attention to the invention of a machine by which to prick the leather for cards; and about the year 1797, he accomplished his desired object by inventing the machine, now in general use, for the manufacture of "twilled" cards.* Since this

* Pliny Earle is the great grandson of Ralph Earle, one of the first settlers of the town, and possesses much of the mechanical ingenuity, in addition to a great fund of general knowledge, which has seemed to characterize those of that name in this town. Mr. Thomas Earle, who recently died here, was honorably noticed by Whitney, in his history, and others of the name also deserve a notice, which our limits will not permit us to give.

invention, and other improvements in machinery, the business of manufacturing cards has regularly progressed, and it was carried to great perfection here, while many of the other manufactures were yet in their infancy. A few cards had been made in Boston, and some other places in the United States, before they were manufactured here. We believe, that the first considerable establishment ever carried on for this purpose in the country, was in this town. Our limits would not permit us, even if we were able, to trace the improvements in the machinery by the means of which this business is carried on; though we may be permitted, we hope, to mention a valuable machine for shaving, or splitting leather, invented by the late John Woodcock, of this town; by the operation of which, leather may be prepared of any thickness desired, with great facility. A patent was procured for this invention, but difficulties arose under it, and manufacturers alone have reaped the benefit of it. There are ten establishments for the manufacture of Cards here, and more than \$200,000 in value are manufactured annually. In most of these establishments, the machinery is carried by hand power; but in Mr. Earle's, before mentioned, steam has been successfully employed, and in the extensive Factory of Messrs. J. & J. A. Smith, & Co. a part of the machinery is carried by water power. The business has been found lucrative and many of our wealthiest and most respectable men have been engaged in it, and not a little of the relative wealth and importance of the place can be traced to this business as its source.

There are Stores of goods connected with many of these manufacturing establishments, and there are two Stores in the village unconnected with them. Besides these, there are two small Book Stores in town, connected with the binderies which supply the ordinary wants of the people. Manufactures, especially Cards, may be considered our staple; and there is scarcely a state in the union that is not, to some extent, supplied with these from this town.

To facilitate the transaction of the business of the town, a Bank with a capital of \$100,000 was chartered at the last session of the Legislature. It has not yet gone into operation, but the Directors and President of the institution were elected on the 26th April, 1826, when John Clapp, Esq of Leicester, was chosen its first President.

HIGHWAYS.—The great post road from Boston to Albany passes through the centre of this town. It is one of the most travelled and important roads in the interior of New England, and was, until

within a few years, the route of the commercial Mail between Boston and New York. This road was laid out as early, if we mistake not, as 1722, it being petitioned for in that year, and the town appropriated £12 2s for their share of the expense in making it, and in 1725, were indicted at the Quarter Sessions in Middlesex, for not having a bridge over Seven Mile River, which is supposed to have been the stream now called by the same name, in the western part of Spencer. The road is called in the petition the "country road," and always bears that name when referred to in the early records of the town. When first laid out through what is now the village, it passed north of its present location, running north of the Academy, near the dwelling house of the Rev. David Parsons, the first minister of the town, which stood north west of the Academy, the cellar of which house is yet visible: Passing across the present common lands, east of the meeting house, it came into the road as it now is, west of the meeting house. Other alterations in this highway, and some of them recent, have been made for the benefit of the traveller, which we will not describe, nor should we have said thus much upon so unimportant a subject, had not the early establishment of this highway seemed to make it a subject of historical interest. In 1806, the Worcester and Stafford turnpike was laid out through the south part of this town: it is upon this, that the commercial Mail is now carried. Besides these roads, there is one running from Paxton to Charlton and Oxford, through the centre of this town: and another, running from Worcester to New Braintree, through the north part. There is a large number of roads leading from this to the neighboring towns, and from one part of this to another, making, in the whole, more than sixty miles of highway, supported at the expense of the town, and kept in repair by an annual tax of, at least, \$1000.

To those who only know this town in its present state, with its large and beautiful village, and the grounds around it highly cultivated and productive, it may be amusing to recur to its state in 1721, when the highway to what is now Paxton was laid out. It began by the then meeting house, at a black birch, standing by a great red oak, behind the meeting house, and close by the same, and run thence, by marked trees, through the forest then covering the region around. That forest has disappeared with the hardy race of men who first disturbed its solitudes, and it is difficult for the imagination, when gazing on the fields now waving with rich harvests, to go back to the times when the haunts of the savage and the

wild beast were here, and a cheerless wilderness alone met the eye.

SCHOOLS, ACADEMY, &c.—Although the inhabitants of this town, at its first settlement, were at comparatively great expense to support the institutions of the gospel, they were not unmindful of the importance of common schools. Within ten years from the settlement of the place, if not sooner, schools were established in three parts of the town, and were kept by one teacher, who was employed at the expense of the inhabitants. About the year 1732, these schools were, for some reason, discontinued; but the Quarter Sessions with becoming, though somewhat singular vigilance, discovered this omission of duty on the part of the inhabitants, and caused them to be presented, in 1733, for their neglect. Schools, from that time, have been regularly kept; nor were they suspended, even during the struggle for our independence; although it seemed as if the last remnant of convertible property had been contributed to aid on that cause. Our ancestors knew, that in order for their sons to retain the independence for which they were struggling, they must be enlightened and instructed. In 1733, a master of a "writing and reading school" was employed for three months, at the rate of £4 10s per month. During all this time, the schools had been kept at private houses, and, in 1736, a school house was first erected. It was 20 by 16 feet in dimensions, and stood about ten rods north of the then meeting house, which was a little south of the place where the present one stands. In 1745, schools were kept in seven different places in town, but all by one man, and £100, old tenor, was appropriated for their support. In 1750, nine men were chosen to superintend the schools and were directed "to procure a grammar school master as soon as may be." Mr. John Cobb had been the school master the preceding year, and had been allowed £125, old tenor. The schools, this year, were kept in three places at the same time, each for the term of six weeks. During this time, Spencer had been a parish of Leicester. In 1765, the town was divided into five school districts, and school houses built in each. There have been too many changes in respect to these districts, since that time, to warrant a detail of them here. At present, they are nine in number, and the whole number of scholars entitled by law to attend these schools, may be estimated at about 750. The sum annually raised for the purpose of schooling is, at present, \$600, and the compensation usually given to teachers has been from \$10 to \$20 per month to men, and from \$4 to \$7 per month to ladies.

Our common schools have ever been justly reckoned amongst the most important institutions of our country. Indeed, they may be considered as at the foundation of every thing valuable in our institutions. From these fountains of knowledge, open to all, without distinction of sex or condition, intelligence is diffused through the community, and with it, a love of country and an attachment to her institutions. The importance of these schools has been appreciated here, and the appropriations for their support have usually been liberal, when compared with those of towns of equal wealth and magnitude.

The people of this town are favored with opportunities for a higher education than is to be obtained in common schools, by means of the very respectable Academy located here. It is one of the oldest Academies in the state, and the character of its instruction is elevated and liberal. It was incorporated under the name of Leicester Academy, March 23, 1784. It owes its foundation to the generosity and public spirit of Col. Jacob Davis, and Col. Ebenezer Crafts, whose munificence was suitably acknowledged in the act of Incorporation. The liberality of these gentlemen, one of them resident in Charlton, and the other in Sturbridge, deserves the gratitude of posterity.* They purchased the commodious Dwelling House, then recently occupied by Aaron Lopez, and its appendages, together with an acre of land, which they conveyed to the Trustees of Leicester Academy, "in consideration of the regard they bear to virtue and learning, which they consider greatly conducive to the welfare of the community." The value of this estate was \$1716, and was situated directly in front of the present Academy buildings. During the same year, (1784,) Dr. Austin Flint, who has ever been a firm patron of the institution, and whose name would fill a larger space in our history than we are allowed to give it, if we were at liberty to follow the dictates of our own feelings, conveyed one hundred and twenty four square rods of land to said trustees, "in consideration of a desire to encourage the Academy." The liberality thus exhibited towards this institution,

* Col. Davis was a native of Oxford, but, at the time of his donation to the Academy, he resided in Charlton, where he owned a valuable estate, adjacent to the estate of his brother, the late Ebenezer Davis, Esq. deceased. He afterwards removed to Montpelier, in Vermont, of which he was a considerable proprietor, and was the first white settler of any respectability in that town, now the seat of Government of Vermont. Col. Crafts commanded the first regiment of Cavalry ever raised in this county. He removed from Sturbridge to the town of Craftsbury, Vermont, where he died. His son, Samuel C. Crafts, who prepared for College at this Academy, was, for many years, a member of Congress from Vermont.

was also manifested by many other public spirited gentlemen in the County. The town of Leicester, in its corporate capacity, gave £500 "consolidated securities." The Hon. Moses Gill gave £150: Thomas Denny, and Thomas Newhall, of Leicester, Gen. Rufus Putnam, of Rutland, and Jeduthan Baldwin, of Brookfield, each gave the sum of £100: Mr. Reuben Swan gave £50: John Southgate, and Samuel Denny, of Leicester, and the Hon. Joseph Allen, Esq. of Worcester, and Timothy Bigelow, Esq. each gave £30: and Isaiah Thomas, L. L. D. gave the sum of £20. Donations were also made by Samuel Green, and Samuel Green, Jr. Peter Taft, Capt. William Watson, and Samuel Watson, of Leicester; Timothy Paine, Esq. and Phinebas Jones, of Worcester; Caleb Ammidown, of Charlton, and John Pierce. Of the original subscriptions, the sum of \$2890 was raised within the town of Leicester, and \$1610 by donations from abroad. Besides these, the state granted to the Academy a township of land in Maine, and a grant to raise \$2000 by a lottery in 1785, to repair their buildings. The late Hon. Mr. Gill, was ever a great benefactor to the institution, and gave, in addition to his former donation, a quantity of Books, for which he paid £30 sterling, in England, for the use of the students in the Academy. In 1811, Col. Thomas Newhall, who had been one of its earliest and firmest supporters, died, and left by his will a legacy of \$1000 to this institution, and the interest of another thousand, to be annually expended in defraying the tuition of those families in town, who reside more than a mile from the Academy. In 1819, Stephen Salisbury, Esq. and the Hon. Dwight Foster, each gave the sum of \$50, and five individuals in Leicester, in 1820, and 1822, gave a sum equal to \$583. These were Alpheus Smith, Hon. Nathaniel P. Denny, Henry Sargent, Austin Flint, and James Smith, Esquires. In 1824, the Commonwealth made a donation of a small farm in Paxton, estimated at \$400. In 1823, Capt. Israel Waters, of Charlton, who had been long known as a man interested in public institutions, left, at his death, most of his estate to the trustees of this Academy, for the support of a teacher, under the restrictions and limitations of the devise. The exact amount to be realized from this estate has not yet been ascertained, but is estimated at eight thousand dollars.

The available funds of the institution, exclusive of the buildings, occupied for the schools, was, in May, 1825, \$10,655; which, added to the Waters donation, places this institution on a respectable and independent foundation. It has ever enjoyed in a good degree

the public favor and confidence and the high character of its trustees and instructors has deserved that confidence.

The first meeting of the trustees was held, April 7, 1784, and the Hon. Moses Gill was elected President of the board: which then consisted of Ebenezer Crafts, and Jacob Davis, Esquires, Hon. Moses Gill, Hon. Levi Lincoln, Hon. Joseph Allen, Hon. Samuel Baker, Hon. Seth Washburn, Rev. Benjamin Conklin, Gen. Rufus Putnam, Rev. Joshua Paine, of Sturbridge, Rev. Joseph Pope, Rev. Archibald Campbell, Hon. Timothy Danielson, of Brimfield, and Rev. Joseph Sumner, D. D. of Shrewsbury. The Hon. Levi Lincoln succeeded Mr. Gill as President, and was succeeded by Dr. Sumner, whose successor was the Rev Dr. Bancroft, who now presides over that board, alike honorably to himself and usefully to the institution.

There has usually been a principal and assistant teacher in this Academy: though, about 1789, the funds of the institution became embarrassed, on account of the depreciated state of the currency, and one instructor only was employed, and his salary in that year was paid out of the treasury of the town. For many years, two instructors have been employed, and, at times, three. There has been a succession of highly respectable men as Preceptors of this Academy, the whole number of whom our limits will not permit us individually to mention. The first in order was Mr. Benjamin Stone,* whose assistant was Mr. Thomas Payson. After a succession of Preceptors, Mr. Ebenezer Adams, took charge of the Institution, in 1792, and continued in that office till 1806, when he resigned it. As a teacher, his character was almost unrivalled. For the fourteen years he continued in that employment, he was uniformly respected and esteemed, as well by his pupils, as by the inhabitants of the town, and when he left, he bore with him the highest testimonials of the regret of the trustees at his surrender of a place he had so usefully filled.† Among those whose names we would mention with respect, as having officiated as teachers in this Academy, are the Rev. Dr. Pierce now of Brookline, Drs. Jackson and Shattuck of Boston, Chief Justice Richardson, of New Hamp-

* Mr. Stone was a native of Shrewsbury, where he now resides. He graduated at Cambridge, in 1776, and studied the profession of Theology, but was never settled over any society.

† Mr. Adams was a native of New Ipswich, in N. H. He graduated at Dartmouth College, in 1791. In 1809, he was appointed to the professorship of Languages in that institution, and subsequently, to that of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, which he now fills with honor, fidelity, and usefulness.

shire, and the Hon. Timothy Fuller, of Cambridge, men of reputation too high either to need, or be advanced by encomiums of ours. The late eminent and lamented Bishop Dehon, of Charleston, S. C. was a preceptor here, in 1796.* Mr. Adams was succeeded by the late Rev. Dr. Moore, and he by the Rev. Luther Wilson, now of Petersham, whose successor was the Rev. Josiah Clark, of Rutland. The present principal instructor of the Academy is, Mr. John Richardson: the preceptor of the English department, Mr. Increase S. Smith.

In 1824, a respectable Philosophical apparatus was procured in London, through the agency of the Rev. Dr. Prince, of Salem, by individuals of the town of Leicester, and given to the Academy.

This institution may now deservedly claim a high rank among those of our country. The salaries to its officers are liberal; it is located in the centre of a rich and populous county, and in a situation pleasant, healthy, and retired from the confusion and dissipation of the dense population of a large town. The situation of the Academy building is high, and commands a fine prospect. The exterior of the building is neat and well proportioned; its interior commodious and well designed. It is three stories high, with sixteen lodging rooms or parlors, besides a dining hall, library, school room, and chapel, and cost between eight and nine thousand dollars. It was intended to accommodate the students with commons, if desired, and a steward occupies a portion of the building for this purpose. Connected with the Academy, is a literary society of the students, possessed of a considerable library.

This was, for many years, the only Academy in the County of Worcester, and is among the oldest in the State: Though our detail of its history may have been tedious, the importance of the subject which seemed to require it, must be our apology.

There are no other literary institutions in town. There are two or three Social Libraries, containing, in the whole, about a thous-

* Bishop Dehon was a native of Boston, and was born Dec. 8, 1776. He entered Harvard University at the age of 14 years, and graduated in 1795. The next year, though but 19 years old, he was employed in the English department of Leicester Academy, and there won the respect and esteem of every one connected with the institution. He was admitted to the order of Priest in 1800, and took charge of the Church in Newport, R. I. where he was remarkably popular and acceptable as a preacher. His ill health, in 1809, induced him to become rector of St. Michael's Church, in Charleston, S. C. In 1812, he was unanimously elected Bishop of the Diocese of South Carolina, which office he sustained till his death, August 6, 1817, when he fell a victim to the yellow fever. He died at the age of 41, and of him it might with propriety be said, "his epitaph should be his name alone."

and volumes of well selected books. The people would be far from being inclined to boast of the effect of these institutions for the promotion of knowledge. The effect of them has been rather to give a good education to many, than to educate a few at the expense of others. Although a majority of the inhabitants in town have, at one time or other, availed themselves of the benefits of the Academy here, there have not more than eight persons graduated from any College, who were natives of the town, since the year 1784, and of these, not one studied theology.

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.—As we have already observed, the records of the town do not go back beyond March, 1721, and the records of the church, as distinguished from those of the town, have not been preserved till within thirty years. In consequence of this, it is impossible to learn when the Congregational Church here was first formed. That it had been formed before March 30th, 1721, appears probable: since, at a town meeting then held, the question of settling Mr. David Parsons, as pastor was acted upon. He had, before that time, received a call to settle as their clergyman, and then gave his answer, accepting their invitation. He was the first clergyman of the town, and was installed in September, 1721. He had been previously, settled in Malden, and dismissed from that people. The terms of his settlement here were, that he should receive a gratuity of £100, be removed, with his family, from Malden, at the expense of the town, and be paid £75 salary per annum. For an additional encouragement, the town gave him forty acres of land in rear of the meeting house, and outlands enough to make up 100 acres. The unanimity of the people on this occasion in addition to the circumstances that some, at least, of his former people, removed with him to Leicester, promised that his connexion with this society would be useful and happy. But it proved far otherwise. He was a man of strong passions, and after a few years, there was very little disposition manifested by many of his people, to quell these passions, when excited. What originated these difficulties it would perhaps be impossible now to ascertain. The embarrassed and straitened circumstances of the people of the town might have been a cause of their neglecting to pay him his annual salary according to contract. In consequence of this neglect, he complained to the Quarter Sessions, in 1728. To this complaint the town made defence, and a long and unhappy lawsuit ensued. It is impossible, and would certainly be unprofitable, to trace the progress of these domestic difficulties. Such, howev-

er, was the state of public feeling, in 1729, that the town voted not to support him any longer as their minister, to join with the church in deposing him; and chose a committee to supply the pulpit. But ecclesiastical contracts were not then so easily severed. This step by one of the contracting parties was inoperative, and the other was not inclined to recede from the strong ground he had taken. Even while the complaint before the Quarter Sessions was pending, he commenced a civil action for the arrears of his salary. These difficulties, at length, became so ruinous to the peace of the town and oppressive to its inhabitants, that they petitioned the Legislature, in 1731, for some relief in the matter, and a paper containing the names of each person in town, in favor and against Mr. Parsons, subscribed by each, was presented to his Excellency, the Governor, (Belcher) to inform him of the actual state of public sentiment upon the subject, and two agents were appointed to offer it. A resolve, in favor of releasing the town from their obligation any longer to support their minister, passed the House of Representatives and the Council, but the Governor refused to sign it. Judgment having been rendered against the town, by the Quarter Sessions, and the Governor, though twice petitioned, refusing to sign the resolves, the town petitioned the Legislature for leave to appeal from the judgment of the Court, "so that they might have a trial in the common law." But this petition failed, on account of the Legislature's being suddenly prorogued, and the town were again called together to revive this petition, in the hope "of being relieved" in the words of the warrant, "from Mr. Parsons' *bondage*." But by one of those sudden fluctuations in public opinion, which are sometimes observed in popular governments, the popular feeling was now turning in favor of Mr. Parsons. The vote dismissing him was reconsidered, his arrears of salary voted, and the Selectmen left to pay the fines assessed upon them by the Quarter Sessions, in consequence of a second complaint of Mr. Parsons, for their neglect in seeing him paid. These votes were, however, said to have been surreptitiously obtained, and produced much excitement.

These facts are detailed, rather as a sample of the mode of proceeding, at that day, in cases of disagreement between a people and their minister, and the disposition of the civil authorities to support ecclesiastical power, than because any interest can be felt in them so long after their occurrence. The differences between Mr. Parsons and his people, did not subside here. They at

length became so notorious, that six gentlemen from Worcester voluntarily assumed the character of mediators and visited the town for that purpose. A public entertainment was provided for them, but their efforts had no success and there was no cessation of hostilities till the town voted to join with the church in calling an ecclesiastical council to discharge him from being their minister. This was on the 13th January, 1735, and he was dismissed, March 6th of the same year from his connexion with the church and society in this town. He continued to reside here till his death in 1737. He was by his special direction buried on his own land, apart from the graves of his people. He was unwilling that his ashes should repose by the side of those with whom he had once worshipped in the sanctuary and to whom he had broken the consecrated bread; his grave is now visible in a mowing field, about 30 rods north of the meeting house—a monument of human frailty. The long continued difficulties, of which we have given an outline, were too important a subject in so young and thinly populated a town to be soon forgotten. They are still handed down by tradition and form anecdotes illustrative of the times in which they occurred. We forbear repeating these, or dwelling any longer upon the character of one, who, with all his frailties, had many redeeming qualities. He left a family, from which have sprung many, who, in later times, have been distinguished for their learning, usefulness and talents, and have been among the most respectable citizens of their day.

After the dismissal of Mr. Parsons, preaching was supported for a time, by contributions taken up on each Sabbath, and a Mr. Rice employed for a while. In 1735, the church and society set apart a day for fasting and prayer, for directions in regard to a successor to Mr. Parsons. And on the 30th January, 1736, they gave a *call* to Mr. David Goddard, who was a native of Framingham, to settle here, and voted him £300 settlement, and £100 salary, so long as he remained their minister. Mr. Goddard accepted this invitation, and in a short and pertinent answer, expressed his wish that the church should be governed according to the rules of the “Cambridge platform,” adopted by the New England churches, in 1648. His salary, while their minister, was often in arrear; but his connexion with his people was uniformly happy and satisfactory, and an addition of £50 per annum was voluntarily made to his salary for several years. He was ordained over the society, June 30, 1736, and died January 19, 1754, at Framingham, where he was seized with a fever, when on a journey. He had been a min-

ister of this church but 13 years, and was 43 years of age, at the time of his death. He alone, of the five clergymen who were settled here, previous to the present one, died in the ministerial service of the society; all the others were dismissed from their connexion.

In July, 1736, Mr. Joseph Roberts, Jr. was invited to settle as the minister over this society, accepted the invitation, and was ordained, October 23, 1754. The town voted to give him £133, 6s. 8d. silver money, "as a settlement," and £66, 13s. 8d. per annum, salary, in silver money, at 6s. 8d. per ounce. The salaries before this time had been paid according to the currency of the day, which was often so depreciated, that what seems at first a large sum, was greatly reduced by this depreciation. Provision was made at his ordination to entertain "ministers, messengers, and scholars."*

Although settled under favorable auspices, the relation of Mr. Roberts to the town soon became unpleasant. The precise causes of the disaffection do not appear, but they had become so strong in 1762, that the society voted to concur with the church in calling a council to settle the difficulties that there existed. The meeting of the inhabitants was called by personal notice to each. They made provision to entertain the council, though they declined taking part in drawing up a list of grievances which the church was going to present to the council. The council met, and recommended a dissolution of the connexion between Mr. Roberts and his people, and on the 14th day of December, 1762, he was accordingly dismissed. This did not, by any means, comport with Mr. Roberts' feelings, but it put an end to the difficulties between him and the people of the town, as he removed soon after from Leicester into Western, or its vicinity, where he died within a few years, at a very advanced age. He lived while a minister here, in the west part of the town, where he owned a considerably extensive tract of land. He was a bachelor, and was possessed of a good estate. Money seems to have been his favorite object, and his reply to the invitation of the society, to become their minister, is a singular specimen of professed devotedness to God and his service, and actual sordidness and avarice.

* From the death of Mr. Goddard, till the settlement of Mr. Roberts, the town had been supplied with preaching, and the sum of £17½ was now appropriated to pay those who had entertained the preachers, while the greater sum of £18 was appropriated to defray the expense of keeping their horses during the same time.

Although the Society were unfortunate in having to provide themselves again with a clergyman within so short a time, they were happy in obtaining one who united them again as a religious society. In August, 1763, Mr. Benjamin Conklin was invited to settle as a minister over the society, and was ordained, November 23, of the same year. His salary was the same as that given to Mr. Roberts, and at his ordination, provision was made to entertain "Ministers, scholars, and *gentlemen*." His relation of minister to this church and society continued till June 30, 1794, when his growing bodily infirmities induced him to accept a proposal from the society for his dismissal, by giving him a gratuity of £170, and an exemption from taxation. The society, at the time of dissolving the connexion between them, expressed to him their thanks for his useful and arduous services, and their sympathies for his declining health and increasing infirmities. The council that dismissed Mr. Conklin, consisted of the Rev. Drs. Sumner, Bancroft, and Austin, and in the result of their proceedings, they bore most unqualified testimony to his high character as a clergyman and a citizen. He survived until January 30, 1798, when he died, at the age of 65. A plain headstone, in the burying ground, in Leicester, bears this inscription, which he had selected for the purpose in his life time. "Hic jacet, Benjamin Conklin, M. in expectatione diei supremi. Qualis erat, dies iste indicabit." He married the widow of Dr. Lawton, who had been a practicing physician in this town. He left three children, one only of whom survives. He was a native of Southold, on Long Island, and was graduated at Princeton College, in New Jersey. He came here when about thirty years of age, and was a minister of this society for more than thirty years, including the trying period of the Revolution, and the troublesome times of the insurrection, known under the name of "Shay's war." It is most conclusive evidence of his prudence and firmness, that during the whole time he officiated here, he was acceptable to his people, and every attempt by disaffected individuals to remove him was controlled and defeated by his society. Though never distinguished for brilliancy of talents, he was a respectable preacher, and ever possessed a commanding influence among his people. He was a firm friend of his country, and never hesitated, even at the darkest period of her history, to avow the sentiments which he entertained. In one of the neighboring towns, it was thought by some of the people, that their clergyman did not preach strongly enough in favor of the cause of liberty; "then," said he, "I will

exchange with Mr. Conklin, and he will satisfy you, I am sure." He was also a decided friend of the government during the insurrection of 1786, and became obnoxious to the insurgents, on account of his active exertions to support the laws and the government, and in one or more instances was obliged to seek a refuge away from his house from personal violence from the insurgents. In his person, Mr. Conklin was rather above the middling stature, and somewhat inclined to corpulency. His address was easy and familiar, and his conversation abounded with anecdote. He, at times, indulged in humor, of which he possessed a considerable share. He was pleasing and interesting without being brilliant, and useful and instructive without being great. He performed the duties of his station honorably and acceptably, and among the patriots of the revolution, he deservedly held a very respectable place.

After the dismissal of Mr. Conklin, Mr. James Tufts was employed to preach as a candidate by this society, and a majority of them desired to settle him, and accordingly gave him an invitation to that effect. But a few of the society dissenting from him in religious sentiments, he declined accepting the invitation. He afterwards became, and we believe still is, the minister of Wardsboro', in Vermont.

In 1795, the Rev. Jesse Appleton preached here as a candidate for settlement. He was, at that time, very young, and though not very popular at first, he became very acceptable to all, and strong efforts were made to induce him to settle. But though unanimously invited, he declined the invitation, much to the regret of all the society. He afterwards became President of Bowdoin College, in Brunswick, Me. in 1807, and died in 1819, very much lamented.

After him, ZEPHANIAH SWIFT MOORE was employed to preach here, and, in October, 1797, was unanimously invited to become the minister of this church and society. He was ordained here, January 10, 1798, upon a salary of \$400 per annum. He continued here till October 28, 1811, when, having been appointed Professor of the Languages in Dartmouth College, he was dismissed at his own request. Dr. Moore filled too important a sphere in society during his life to be passed over in silence, when giving what purports to be a history of a town to which he held the relation of a minister of the Gospel for almost 14 years. He was born in Palmer, in this State, but removed in early life to Wilmington, Vt. Here he labored with his father, who was a respectable farmer, till he was twenty years of age.

A part of his course of study preparatory to admission into college, he pursued at Bennington. He graduated from Dartmouth College in 1793, with a high character as a scholar. He studied Divinity with the Rev. Dr. Backus, of Somers, in Connecticut. He was appointed Professor of Languages in Dartmouth College, in 1811, and continued there till 1815, when he received and accepted the appointment of President of Williams College, in Massachusetts, where he continued till his appointment of President of Amherst Collegiate Institution, which has, since his death, been chartered as a college. This appointment was made in 1821, and he held the office at the time of his death, June 30, 1823. He died at the age of 52 years, leaving a wife, but no children.

In every station which he held, he exhibited powers of mind, and strength of character to perform the duties incumbent upon him, with the greatest honor and success. He was, indeed, no ordinary man, and we feel that any attempt to delineate his character, or do justice to his reputation, as a scholar, as a christian, and as a man, must, in a great measure, fail. We hope some abler pen will yet do justice to his memory.

He was an indefatigable student, and possessed a remarkably sound and discriminating mind. His acquirements were extensive in almost every department of science and literature that came under his examination. But his favorite study, next to that of Theology, were moral Philosophy and Metaphysics. He was possessed of an unshaken firmness of character, and though cool and deliberate in forming opinions or arriving at conclusions, when they were once formed, he adhered to them with fearless resolution till convinced of his errors. He was often able to carry through a favorite plan with success, which to others would have seemed hopeless and desperate. His progress from the plough to the chair of President of a College, though never rapid, was sure and unwavering.

In every situation in life, he was kind, social, and engaging. But it was in his own family, and at his own fireside, that he exhibited most fully those qualities which we love and admire. His conversation was of an elevated and improving character, and no one could leave his society without having been delighted and instructed. In the government and discipline of a college, he had no superior. His accurate knowledge of human nature, his decision of character, and his urbanity of manners, while they enabled him to discriminate properly in the subjects of his government, carried respect and enforced obedience, and at the same time won the

confidence and affection of the pupil. As a writer, his productions may be considered as almost a model of fine composition. He rarely indulged in rhetorical ornaments of style, but was always neat and perspicuous, and often eloquent. His sermons were always heard with interest and attention, and would be read with pleasure as well as profit.

The writer has known Dr. Moore in almost every situation in life, and has had cause to love and respect him, while he admired those qualities of mind which he exhibited under all circumstances, and some of them the most trying. But it would be improper to intrude any personal feelings towards him in this place; we are only to speak of his character as it should be known in history, and we regret that we can do it so little justice. But we are not sufficiently removed from the time in which he lived, to have his character and reputation presented in their proper light. His is a fame that will brighten, and be remembered, when many whose genius was more brilliant and dazzling, will be forgotten. His name must ever be remembered as connected with Amherst College, for to his reputation and exertions, more than any other thing, may the early success and even existence of that institution be ascribed. We leave it to posterity to do him justice. His private virtues may be forgotten; for those only who knew him could appreciate *them*; but his character as a theologian, an instructor, and as a President and Director of a Seminary of learning, will be remembered.

He married, soon after becoming the minister of Leicester, to a daughter of the late Thomas Drury, of Ward, in this county, who still survives him. In his person, Dr. Moore was large, and very well formed; his manners were dignified and easy; his voice, though not very loud, was clear and distinct, and its tones remarkably pleasant. His manner of delivery was entirely free from affectation and attempt at display: he made use of but little action, but he was always listened to with interest and attention.

He received the degree of Doctor of Divinity at Dartmouth College, in the year 1816. In the year 1818, he preached the annual election sermon, before the executive and legislature of Massachusetts. He was, for some years before his death, a member of the American board of commissioners for foreign missions. His election sermon, and a few occasional sermons, were the principal productions of his pen ever published.

Although the town consented to the dismissal of Dr. Moore

with reluctance and regret, and his removal was then considered a public misfortune to his society, they were so fortunate as to unite immediately in giving an unanimous call to Mr. John Nelson, Jr. to become their minister. He accepted the call, and was ordained March 4, 1812; but a little more than four months from the time of Dr. Moore's dismission. His salary at first was \$450 per annum, but is at present, (1826) \$650. Mr. Nelson was a native of Hopkinton, in this state, from whence he removed with his father to Worcester. He graduated at Williams College, in 1807, and was subsequently a tutor in that college, and afterwards pursued his theological studies under the tuition of the Rev. Dr. Austin, of Worcester.

From the time of the dismission of Mr. Parsons, the congregational society have, for the most part, been in a state of great peace and tranquillity, and this spirit has prevailed in regard to religious opinions throughout the town; although there have, for many years, been several religious societies who have places of worship here. The first congregational meeting house was erected before the year 1721, though not completed till many years afterwards. That having gone much to decay, and being inconvenient, a new one was erected and completed in 1734 and '5, a little in the rear of the original house.

From the settlement of Mr. Parsons, till 1768, if the society was provided with church music at all, those who sung were scattered promiscuously through the audience. In that year, "the use of the *hindermost* seat in the front gallery" was appropriated to "those who had learned the rules of singing," and it was not till 1780, that the singers were allowed to sit in the front seat in the gallery.

Besides the congregational society, there has, for a long time, been a society of Baptists, and one of Friends; an Episcopalian society has recently been organized in the town. There was, from 1777 till 1783, a society of Jews resident in this town. They removed here in the winter of 1777, from Newport, in Rhode Island, to escape from the war then raging so violently along our coasts, and especially threatening the devoted island upon which Newport is situated, then in possession of the enemy. There were, in the whole, including servants, about seventy who removed here; though many of the servants were not of the Jewish faith. Among the most respectable Jews, were Aaron Lopez, and four others of the name of Lopez, Jacob Revera, and Abraham Men-

dez.* Most of them engaged immediately in trade, and Aaron Lopez, in particular, was very extensively engaged. He occupied, and in part built, the house afterwards occupied for the Academy. Licences to these are recorded in the town records, "to sell Bohea and other Indian teas." They all resided here until after the peace of 1783. Although, so far as respected their religion, they were entirely distinct from the rest of the inhabitants of the town: they were, in all other respects, on terms of great intimacy and friendship. They always observed the rites and ceremonies of their law, and their stores were closed from Friday evening until Monday morning.† They were prudent, industrious, and enterprising, and many of them were elegant in their address and deportment, and possessed an extensive knowledge of the world. They were much respected and esteemed by the inhabitants of the town, and always seemed to remember with pleasure, the kindness and civilities they, on their part, received while resident here, and availed themselves, ever afterwards, of every opportunity that presented to express these feelings, as many who experienced their attentions when in Newport would attest.‡

Of all those who removed to this town from Newport, no one now remains here. The last of their number removed, a few years since, to New York. The synagogue where they worshipped, is now desolate and forsaken; the grass waves luxuriantly in the court yard; and the little furniture remains, as when last used for holy service more than thirty years ago. The church yard, in which most of this number are buried, is still preserved in a state of uncommon neatness and beauty. But we have digressed, per-

* Aaron Lopez occupied what was afterwards the old Academy. Joseph was the son of Aaron, and lived with him. Moses and Jacob were clerks for Aaron. Mendez lived, for a time, where B. Hobart now lives, about half a mile north of the meeting house, and afterwards in the old house at the foot of the meeting house hill, called the "Southgate house." Revera lived in the house which forms a part of the Hotel, opposite the meeting house.

† A child of one of the families having one day tasted of some pork, in one of the neighbor's houses, its mother, immediately, upon learning the fact, administered a powerful emetic, and thus cast out the sin of which it had been unconsciously guilty.

‡ The death of Mr. Aaron Lopez, the most wealthy and intelligent of their number, took place under circumstances peculiarly distressing. Travelling to Providence, himself in a gig, accompanied by his wife and family in a carriage, he drove into Scott's pond, in Smithfield, to water his horse, when, from the abruptness of the shore, the horse sunk immediately beyond his depth, and drawing the gig after him, threw Mr. Lopez into the water, where he perished, in presence of his family, whose efforts to save him were unavailing.

haps too far, to follow to their last resting place, those, who once formed a respectable portion of the population of this town. Their history had no important connection with that of the town, and it entirely ceased at the time of their removal in 1783.

A society of Anabaptists was formed in this town, about the year 1738. The first minister of the society was Dr. Thomas Green, a physician of considerable note in his day. It was chiefly through his instrumentality that the society was gathered. This church appears to have once formed part of a society of Baptists in Sutton, of which Dr. Green was one of the pastors.

Dr. Green was a native of Malden, Mass. and was one of the early settlers of Leicester. His circuit of business as a Physician was extensive, and his life was that of active and persevering industry. His success as a preacher was also very considerable, and a very respectable society was gathered. A meeting house was built through his agency, about three miles from the congregational meeting house. This house requiring great repairs, the society, in 1825, enlarged and repaired it, and it is now a very neat and convenient house of worship. Dr. Green died in 1773, at the age of 73 years, after a life distinguished for its activity and usefulness. His descendants, though not very numerous, have been among the useful and distinguished men of the county; and some of them have particularly excelled in the profession of medicine, for which they have shown a predilection.

Dr. Green was succeeded, as a pastor of this church, by the Rev. Benjamin Foster, D. D. whose talents and acquirements ranked him among the highest order of the profession. He was a native of Danvers, Mass. and born June 12, 1750. At the age of 18, he entered Yale College, where he was regularly graduated, and afterwards pursued the study of Theology under the tuition of Dr. Stillman, of Boston, and was ordained over the Baptist Church in Leicester, in 1772, where he continued several years, and while there, published some controversial tracts of considerable merit. Soon after leaving Leicester, he was settled in Newport, R. I. and, in 1783, became the pastor of the first Baptist church in the city of New York, where he continued till his death, in 1798. He received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity at Brown University, in 1792, in consequence of a learned treatise upon "the seventy weeks of Daniel," which he had previously published. He was a distinguished scholar, an eminent preacher, and a consis-

tent christian. He fell a victim to the yellow fever, which prevailed in the city of New York during the summer of his death. Not daunted in the performance of his parochial duties, he was unremitting in his attention to the sick and dying, and he shrunk not from those scenes of affliction, from which so many of the best and the bravest recoiled with terror. He died August 26, 1798, at the age of 49 years. He was twice married, his first wife being the daughter of the Rev. Dr. Green, of Leicester, and the other, a lady from New York.

Dr. Foster was succeeded in the charge of the Leicester church by Mr. Isaac Beals; whose successor was Mr. Nathan Dana; and his again was Mr. Peter Rogers, who became the pastor of a church in Leyden, Mass. after his removal from Leicester. Since Mr. Rogers' removal, the church has been supplied pretty constantly with preachers, though no one has been regularly ordained over it.* There are funds, in lands, to the amount of \$1000, belonging to the society, and though called to struggle with difficulties, it has ever maintained a respectable standing. It had, in 1812, seventy eight communicants in the church, and, at present, there are about forty two. Mr. Harris at present officiates in this society as their pastor, though he has not been ordained. A part of this society were separated, about 1818, and formed a part of a Baptist society in the northeast part of Spencer, and to this circumstance may be referred, the diminished number of its members.

There has been a respectable society of Friends in this town for a great number of years. In 1732, eight persons filed their certificate with the Town Clerk that they belonged to that persuasion, who, either from a mistake in spelling, or to make an angry and execrable pun, calls them "those people called *Quackers*."† As no records are preserved of the early history of this society, we have not been able to trace it any farther than to the uniting of the families of these eight persons into a society. They had a house of worship, which stood where the present meeting house of that people stands; but when it was erected, we have not been

* Among those who supplied the pulpit, was the Rev. Mr. Hill, who is now a deservedly acceptable and popular preacher, in New Haven, Conn.

† Among the original number of those professing themselves Friends, in this town, was Mr. Ralph Earle, many of whose descendants of the same name, have belonged to this society, and been among the most respectable inhabitants of the town. Indeed, most of the members of this society, in this town, have been distinguished for their enterprise and intelligence, and have ever formed an useful and respectable portion of the population of the town, distinguished for their probity, hospitality, and wealth.

able to learn. The society, having become numerous, and that house being old, and somewhat decayed, in 1791, they removed the old, and built the present meeting house, which, according to Whitney, is a "very good house for their way of worship." It is situate in the north part of the town, about one and an half miles from the Congregational meeting house. The house is commodious, and of good proportions, although destitute of any thing ornamental. The spot in which it stands is retired, and almost surrounded with forest trees; around it, repose in their "nameless graves," the ashes of those who have died of the society. Though we do not profess any particular attachment to their "way of worship," we know of but few spots more calculated to awaken serious reflections than this. A solemn stillness reigns around it, and it seems as if it might be one of those few places where the cares of the world do not intrude. The society consists, at present, of about one hundred and thirty members, not all of whom, however, belong to Leicester.

In 1823, an Episcopalian society was gathered and formed, in the south part of Leicester, embracing the manufacturing establishment there, and several families from Oxford North Gore, and from Charlton. Among the most active in forming this society were, Mr. Anderton, whose name we have before had occasion to mention, Samuel Hartwell, Esq. and family, Francis Wilby, an English gentleman, resident in Boston, and several other gentlemen, with their families, who resided in the vicinity of the church.*

A very neat church for the use of this society was erected, by private subscription, and was consecrated by Bishop Griswold, on the last Wednesday in May, 1824. The Rev. Joseph Muenscher had previously been employed by the society, and it was now put under his pastoral charge. He is the present rector of this church, which is in a flourishing state. This was the first Episcopal church ever formed in Worcester County, and has had difficulties and discouragements to encounter, such as usually attend the formation of a new society. The church is situated upon the south side of the Stafford turnpike, about fifty rods from French River, and the Leicester and Saxon factories. Mr. Muenscher is a native of Providence, and was graduated at Brown University. He studied Theology at Andover, and was admitted to orders by Bishop Griswold,

* Among the most active of these was Mr. Hezekiah Stone, who liberally gave the ground upon which the church is erected, besides conferring other acts of liberality.

in March, 1824, immediately after which, he took charge of the church in Leicester. His marriage with a daughter of the late Joseph Washburn, was, we believe, the first ever consummated in this county in Episcopal form.

Such are some of the outlines of the ecclesiastical history of the town of Leicester, which, though necessarily imperfect, are sufficient to show, that the inhabitants of the town have been highly favored, in general, in respect to the important interests of religious instruction. Many of their teachers have been eminent for their faithfulness and abilities; and, on the other hand, the people have generally shown a good degree of liberality in contributing to the support of their clergymen. The utmost harmony and good fellowship has uniformly prevailed among the different sects and societies in town, each extending to the others, that courtesy and confidence which become those professing the same faith, though differing, in some particulars, in their mode of worship and form of government. In the interchange of civilities, in the election of civil officers, and in almost all the relations of society and social life, no distinction is made between members of different societies. Each is left to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, and the consequence has been, that the town has flourished and prospered, while many, possessing equal natural advantages, have been distracted by intestine divisions, and lost that elevated rank they might otherwise have held.

CIVIL HISTORY.—We feel no inconsiderable reluctance to attempt the civil history of this town, for the records have been found so imperfect, and the traditionary accounts so vague, that we are aware of our inability to do any thing like justice to the subject, and that it must be extremely imperfect, even in relation to those portions that are the most interesting and important. But we have been able to glean enough from its records and the recollection of some of its aged inhabitants to furnish to a more patient and successful laborer a clue, by which to guide his future investigations.

According to the Massachusetts Register, annually published in Boston, the town of Leicester is the fifth incorporated, in what is now the County of Worcester, and was incorporated, agreeably with the record we have before copied, in 1713. Whitney incorrectly places this event in 1720, or 1721.

As early as 1721, the town had begun to exercise the powers of an incorporated town, by choosing all the officers belonging to

such a town, and was, moreover, represented in the General Court of the Province, though no record of any choice is to be found until the next year, when the same men who represented them the year before were again chosen.*

The first Corn Mill in town was erected in 1722, and as an inducement to build it, the town voted that it should forever be exempt from taxation. It stood, as is believed, on the north side of the great post road, about half a mile from the meeting house.

Although quite a number of town meetings were held, and their transactions recorded, previous to 1724, we do not find his Majesty's name made use of, in any way, previous to that time, when a meeting was first called "in his Majesty's name." This, however, was rather the result of accident, or imperfect records, than from any want of loyalty, or from the preponderance of republican feelings; since, at that day, loyalty and patriotism were convertible terms, and even at a later day, some of the leading men in town were distinguished for their loyalty.†

We have not been able to ascertain to what extent the inhabitants of the town suffered from the depredations of the Indians. They undoubtedly shared in the horrors of the wars which the natives carried on against the people of the province. In 1726, the town was

* The Hon. John Minsie was the person elected. He was a leading man in town and appears to have been very respectable and influential. He removed from Roxbury to Leicester, and is usually stiled Judge Minsie in the records of the town. When or where he held that office, we have not been able to ascertain. He resided upon a tract of 500 acres, which he owned, around the Henshaw Pond, and was long remembered for having introduced the "*White Weed*," principally, we believe, on account of its beauty.

† Among these, we would name with respect, the Hon. Thomas Steel, Esq. a native of Boston, who removed to Leicester and built a dwelling house about half a mile east of the meeting house which is yet standing (called the Southgate house.) He was liberally educated, and graduated at Cambridge, in 1730, and stands upon the catalogue of that year, when each student's name was arranged according to his relative rank in life, the fourth in order; the first being the famous Peter Oliver, to whom the province afterwards owed so much of its difficulties and distress. Mr. Steel, was bred a merchant, and pursued that business till his removal from Boston to Leicester, where he also kept a store. He was, from 1756 to 1774, an associate judge of the Court of Common Pleas in Worcester County, and always remained firm in his loyalty to the King. It is noticable, that the most spirited resolutions of the town against the aggressions of the mother country, previous to 1770, are recorded in the town records in his hand writing—a kind of involuntary treason that he dare not refuse to commit. He was wealthy when he first came to this town; but owing to misfortunes, his wealth became very much reduced. His influence, until the revolution, was, deservedly great; for he was a man of intelligence and integrity. He was several times chosen to represent the town, in the General Court, and successively held most of the responsible offices.

at the expense of erecting a garrison, as it was called, around the house of Mr. Parsons, to protect them from the attacks of the savages. This was a little north east of the meeting house. There were other garrisons, for the same purpose, erected in other parts of the town. One of these, was near the dwelling house, belonging to the Henshaw family, near the Henshaw pond, and its outlines may be traced now. The house occupied by John King, Esq. in the south part of Leicester, upon the Oxford road, was also, as is believed, a garrison house, and marks of musket balls are yet said to be visible in parts of it, which can be referred only to the times of the Indian wars. Another garrison was near Mr. Jonah Earle's dwelling house.

The town seems to have been troubled in its fiscal concerns for some time after its settlement. The inhabitants, immediately upon their removing here, assumed the expenses of schools and the support of a minister, which, together with the necessary highways they were compelled to make, rendered their expenses burdensome; especially, as much of the land in town became, in the course of years, either the property of a few individuals in town, or of those, who, residing out of it, were exempt from the burdens of the resident proprietors. They lived too, at a time when false notions of wealth and public economy prevailed. An unhealthy, and almost worthless currency, had inundated the state, and the general complaint of a scarcity of money prevailed throughout the province. The inhabitants of this town, in common with the majority of the people of the province, were deceived into an opinion that the difficulties under which all were laboring might be removed by new emissions of paper money, which must ever be worthless, when it ceases to be the representative of real wealth, and so redeemable that its nominal, may become its actual value, at the will of the holder. In 1727, an emission of £60,000 in paper money, was made by the Legislature, and loaned to the people of the province, the interest arising from which was to go towards the support of government. This town appointed trustees to receive its proportion of this grant and to loan it to the inhabitants, so that no one should have more than ten, nor less than five pounds.

The question as to the value of the currency, from time to time, in the early history of NewEngland, though interesting and important in a historical point of view is attended with too much labor and difficulty and would occupy too much time for us to attempt to settle. Its fluctuations were so frequent, and its depreciation often

so great, that what, at first sight, may seem enormous sums, when reduced by the scale of depreciation, for the time being, dwindle into comparative insignificance. The depreciation of the money was not so great, before the year 1745, as it afterwards was. The only criterion which we possess to ascertain any thing like its standard value is, a comparison of the prices of labor and produce at different times, during our history. In 1726, four shillings per day, were allowed by the town for labor upon a "garrison" they were then building. In 1754, two shillings per day for men, and one shilling for a yoke of oxen were allowed upon the highways. In 1774, three shillings per day for men were allowed. In 1780, so rapid had the money depreciated, that six *pounds* per day were paid for labor on the highways. In 1775, the delegate in the Provincial Congress from this town, received five shillings per day for his services. The same sum was paid, in 1788, to representatives in the General Court, while Senators had five shillings and sixpence, and Counsellors six shillings, per day. The compensation of members of Congress from this State was fixed, that year, at four dollars per day. The next year, this town gave their representative but four shillings per day. In 1790, labor on the highways was fixed at three shillings per day, and the next year, at two. In the year 1752, one pound, lawful money, was paid for boarding a school master six weeks; and in 1779, the member of the convention that formed the Constitution, from this town, paid one hundred and eighty two dollars per week, for his board. In 1780, the ratio of depreciation of the old money was, as 40 to 1.

In 1776, a committee was appointed, agreeably to a resolve of the General Court, to fix the prices at which labor, produce, &c. then stood, and this estimation must have been made in reference to a currency then at par. The list of articles, prepared and reported by this committee, was very large, and we will only transcribe a few items from the report, for the purpose of comparing them with the same articles at the present day. Labor, per day, in the summer, was estimated at three shillings; and in the winter, at half that sum: by the year, at twenty pounds. Men's shoes, at eight shillings per pair; horse hire, at two pence per mile: shoeing a horse, five and sixpence; a good gun and bayonet at eighty four shillings; Indian corn, at three shillings; Rye, at four and sixpence; wheat, at six shillings per bushel: Butter, nine pence; Beef, three and a half pence per pound; salt pork, at eight pence, per pound: and "*Toddy and Flip*" at one shilling "*per mug*."

The depreciation of the currency was not confined to the emissions from this state. In 1785, five dollars of the Rhode Island currency, and eight dollars of that of New Hampshire, were worth but three shillings here. But we are approaching too extensive a subject for our means or time to master, and must therefore leave it for some curious and patient antiquarian.

It would be impossible to fix the actual state of the depreciation at different times ; since it was so rapid, and withal so fluctuating, that a person was chosen by this town, in 1786, to report, as often as once a week, to the inhabitants, the value of the paper money and public securities.

The early records of the town are quite imperfect, and only a partial account of the transactions they purport to record, can be gleaned from them : we can, therefore, hardly pursue a correct chronological order in relating those circumstances which we have been able to gather respecting its history. Many of the votes passed and some of the officers chosen are not perfectly obvious in their necessity or policy. We can hardly conceive the necessity for a "clerk of the market" in a place where none bought, and few sold any thing of a marketable character, yet that office, as well as that of deer-reeve, was regularly filled for a great many years after the incorporation of the town. Another officer who was chosen annually for many years, but, though a statute officer, is now discontinued, was a "warden." The best solution of this was offered by an elderly gentleman, of whom we enquired the use, that coming from Old England our fathers wanted to have every thing here as they had left them at home.

The inhabitants were troubled, for many years, by the proprietors of the lands, most of which then lay common, taking cattle from abroad to pasture upon these common lands ; and in order to prevent this, they levied a tax of ten shillings per head, upon all cattle so taken to be fed ; and a still more singular vote was passed, that all rams running at large should be "free plunder," and any one who should take such, might have them, for his own.

Although, as we have seen, the people of the town must have been far from wealthy, for many years after settling here, they were not burthened with taxes for the support of the poor until 1745, when provision was made for the support of a poor child that happened to be in need : not many years after, a small sum was appropriated to help a poor man to provide himself with a cow. It is impossible now to ascertain the precise amount which

has been expended for the support of the poor of the town since that time. We may safely assert, that from five to eight hundred dollars are annually expended, for this purpose, at present.

The people of the town were affected, in common with those of the whole of New England, by the early wars with the French, and furnished men, from time to time, to aid the expeditions which were carried on by the Province. The meagerness of the records leaves us in uncertainty, as to the numbers actually engaged in these wars, from this town. But when the Grand Canada expedition, as it was called, was planned by Governor Shirley, in 1746, to drive the French from their North American possessions, this town furnished men for the army then raised, and, as an additional compensation for their sacrifices, their taxes were abated by the town.

Every thing favored a prevalence of loyal feelings among the people of New England, at this period, and in Leicester, no less than in other parts of the country; some of its most leading men were natives of Great Britain, and had all the ties of kindred, besides the natural feeling of attachment to the place of their birth, to bind them to the mother country. Richard Southgate, and Daniel Denny, both of them influential men in their day, were natives of Coombs, in Suffolk county, in England.* They left Coombs in June, 1715, and arrived in Boston in September. The next year, Southgate went back to England and returned with his family, and Dr. Thomas Prince, who had been the clergyman of Coombs, and was afterwards settled in Boston, the venerable annalist of New England. They arrived in Boston, in July, 1717; in the March following, Southgate and family, and Denny and family, removed to Leicester. Mr. Denny settled upon the farm, still in possession of the family, about two miles south east from the meeting-house. He was a brother of Dr. Prince's wife, and of Major Denny, as he is called, who settled, about the year 1728, in Maine, where he became a man of wealth and influence, being, at the time of his death, first Judge of the "court of pleas," and president of the court of sessions in the county of Lincoln.†

* Richard Southgate was born in 1673, and died at the age of 88 years, in 1758. Daniel Denny was born 1694, and died April 16, 1760, at the age of 66 years.

† Richard Southgate had two sons, Stuart and Richard: the first, the father of the Hon. Robert Southgate, of Scarborough, Maine, and of the late Capt. John Southgate, whose family still reside in Leicester. The children of Richard were more numerous, and one branch of his family only, bearing his name, remains in Leicester—the children of his son Isaac.

Daniel Denny had two sons, Thomas and Samuel. Both of them we shall

The precise number of men furnished by this town during the several French wars, as they were called, cannot now be precisely ascertained; that it was never backward in furnishing its quotas, the facts which are recorded of those times, and their promptness in subsequent calls, most clearly prove.

One man yet survives, at the advanced age of 86, who was a soldier from 1756 to 1761, and was in the memorable affair of Fort William Henry, in 1757, when so many English and Americans were massacred by the savages of Montcalm's army. His name is Knight Sprague, a native of Hingham, from which place he marched, in 1756. The next year, he was with Col. Bradstreet at the taking of Fort Frontinac, on Lake Ontario. His memory is yet accurate and tenacious. Fort William Henry was surrendered, according to his account, about 10 o'clock on Wednesday morning, and the English were detained till the next morning and guarded by the French. As soon however as the army had left the fort, to take up their march, according to the terms of capitulation, the Indians rushed upon them, and began to strip and kill the prisoners. Sprague escaped, after being partially stripped.—His captain was stripped naked, as were many women, he passed, in his flight, towards Fort Edward. Of the half company to which he belonged, fifteen out of the fifty, were killed, that day. Munro, the British commander, as represented by Sprague, was a dignified man of about fifty years of age. Montcalm was a fine looking man, extremely well formed, and very active and graceful, but small in stature.

The inhabitants of this town early felt, and boldly expressed, an opposition to those acts of the mother country which tended to curtail the liberties of the colonies. At this day, it is difficult to realize, in all their forces, the feelings of the colonists from 1763 till their independence was acknowledged. History has done them justice as a nation, and eulogies upon the prominent leaders in that struggle have preserved their names and handed them down to posterity with a lustre which time cannot dim. But injustice must, of necessity, have been done to those no less deserving men, who, in the private circles, the village meetings, and the smaller assemblies of the people, kept alive that sacred flame that burned so

have occasion to mention hereafter. The son of Thomas was the late Col. Thomas, and father of the present Thomas Denny. Samuel had several sons, among whom, was the Hon. Nathaniel P. Denny. These families have ever held a highly respectable station in society, and had deserved influence in town.

brightly through the land. It is surprising to read, on the records of obscure villages and towns, resolutions and sentiments that would have done credit to the hall of Congress. We do not speak unguardedly. Resolutions are now preserved in our town records, which were prepared and acted upon in the years of the American revolution, that only want the name of a statesman as their author, to make them rank in interest and importance with those which have been so generally and justly admired. In this town, though its population must have been small, though its inhabitants had enjoyed none but ordinary means of education, and though, as it is believed, no one, except their clergyman, of the whig party, had ever enjoyed the means of a public education, and many of the foremost men were even destitute of a good common education, its records cannot now be read, without exciting admiration at the knowledge and discrimination of political principles and of public wrongs and injuries which those records evince.

The town were in the habit of giving to their representatives instructions upon those topics upon which they felt the most interest. This began in 1765, when John Brown was chosen their representative in the General Court of the Province. A committee was then appointed to draft resolutions, of which, Daniel Henshaw was chairman; the report was presented to the people, in town meeting, and there accepted. It will be impossible to do justice to any of these papers, by the few extracts we shall be able to give, but their length renders the entire insertion impossible.

The state of the controversy, at that time, is too well known to need a recapitulation of its history here, in order to understand the sketches we shall give. The contest about taxing the colonies was high; the stamp act had been passed; and the popular excitement had extended so far, in Boston, as to lead to the destruction of Governor Hutchinson's house by the mob. The instructions to Capt. Brown, alluded to "the then critical juncture of time and affairs," and expressed the expectation that their representative will maintain "their natural rights; their rights as Englishmen, which derive to them as subjects of Great Britain, and those granted them by charter." They charge him to be frugal of the money belonging to the government, and to be strictly careful that it be not drawn out of the treasury, but by appropriation of the General Court; as any other course would be, virtually, taxing the people contrary to the constitution, and in subversion of one of their darling rights. They speak of the levying taxes, and the "stamp act,

which, they cannot but think, is contrary to the rights of man, subversive of the English constitution, and directly tending to bring them into a state of abject slavery and vassalage : that they purchased and settled this country, without expense to Great Britain, and have cheerfully contributed to advance her glory and prosperity, and therefore expect all the privileges of citizens of that government : that they esteem it an essential privilege to be taxed by their representatives, and that they had no voice in levying the stamp act, so burdensome, especially, upon the widow and fatherless." The instructions also refer to the stretch of admiralty powers of the court, more alarming than the stamp act itself, "by which, every man, at the option of a malicious informer, is liable to be carried a thousand miles before a court of vice admiralty ; there tried without jury, amerced by an arbitrary judge, and taxed with costs, as he shall please ; and if the parties have not wherewith to satisfy the same, to die in prison in a foreign land, without friends to bury them : this we apprehend to be repugnant to the magna charta, by which no freeman shall be taken, imprisoned, or deprived of his liberties, or free customs, nor passed upon, nor condemned, but by the lawful judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land. The love we bear to our fellow subjects of Great Britain, the love and duty we owe to ourselves and posterity, yea, the first instinct of nature, the great law of self preservation, all appear contrary to said act." They proceed to lament the state into which the country was thrown, and reprobate, in the strongest terms, the riots that had taken place : they express their surprise and regret at the Governor's imputing these to the people of the Province ; charge the representative by no means to agree to any thing which might show a willingness to submit to the obnoxious acts of Parliament, nor to consent to make good the damages sustained by the Governor in the riot, since that might lead to such practices in future.

Our extracts, though somewhat liberal, convey but a slight idea of the spirit, or style and language of the paper. Its length alone, precludes our inserting it entire ; for nothing can better show the precise state of public feeling, at that time, than documents like this, in which it is so undisguisedly expressed. We cannot but again repeat our surprise, at the high state of excitement which so early prevailed in a community, which was, comparatively, destitute of newspapers and posts, by which, at the present day, a feeling in, one part of the nation is, at once, communicated to every part. The

men, who, in language like that we have transcribed, could talk of the principles of the British constitution, the magna charta, and of trial by jury, were but a chance selection from the general mass of the people, pursuing the same callings, and possessing the same advantages with them, and during an adjournment of their meeting for an hour, wrought such sentiments into a report which was unanimously accepted by the people of the town. It is unnecessary to repeat, that the efforts of their representative, in pursuance of his instructions, were unavailing. The continued aggressions of the crown disclosed, how little the government regarded the first movings of that mighty flood that was to overwhelm them.

After the dissolution of the General Court of the Province, by the Governor, in 1768, the town of Boston passed several very spirited resolutions; in accordance with these, and in consequence of the alarming crisis of affairs, this town adopted sundry resolutions, in which they condemn the dissolution of General Court, and the delay in summoning another, as real grievances, and chose a delegate to meet with a convention, in Boston, called by the recommendation of the people of that town, in consequence of the delay of the Governor in calling a new General Court. Capt. John Brown was chosen their delegate, and instructed not to suffer any thing to be done rashly, and that every mild measure be adopted that might be consistent with the duties of Englishmen, claiming their rights.

This town very promptly united in preventing the importation of English goods, with those, who hoped, by this measure, to make the people in the various sections, feel the importance of the American market for their prosperity, and therefore combine, to prevent the ministry from persevering in measures, so ruinous to the mother country, as well as the colonies. At a town meeting, held in January, 1770, they voted not to purchase of those merchants in Boston, who imported goods from Great Britain; and at the same time, voted their thanks to those merchants, who, by refusing to import such goods, sacrificed their own interest to the good of their country.*

* This meeting was called, in consequence of the following petition, from sundry individuals to the Selectmen, dated Dec. 25, 1769, viz.—Whereas, there are several persons in this province who have sordidly detached themselves from the public interest, and have taken advantage of the agreement entered into by the merchants for non-importation, thereby endeavoring to defeat their noble design of saving their country from slavery: We, the subscribers, will endeavor, by all lawful means, to prevent their base designs, and for that end, we pray that you will grant a warrant for the calling a town meeting, to act on the following articles, viz.—To vote that any person,

The defect of newspapers at that day was, so far as the opposition to the crown was concerned, pretty well supplied by pamphlets and similar publications from the press, which were liberally scattered through the land. Whatever was thus sent, was sure to be read. The selectmen of this town, having received one of these, together with a circular letter from the town of Boston, in 1772, immediately summoned the town together to hear them read. The pamphlet was one "wherein the rights of the colonists, and the infringement thereof, are set forth." After hearing it, the town voted, that "the rights, as there stated, do belong to the inhabitants of this province," and chose a committee, of which Capt. Brown was chairman, to prepare resolutions in accord with the pamphlet. Among these, they express their allegiance to the King; their willingness to risk their lives and fortunes in defence of their rights; that Parliament had passed laws subversive of their rights and privileges; that "the British Parliament, or any other power on earth, had no right to dispose of one cent of their property without their consent, in person, or by representatives; and that carrying any person out of this province, or beyond sea, for any supposed crime, is contrary to the magna charta, and unconstitutional." They, at the same time, gave instructions to their representative, Thomas Denny, Esq. wherein they recapitulate the wrongs to be redressed. Among others, that the Governor is independent of the people for his salary, and the Judges dependent on the crown, when they ought to be independent both of prince and people, in order to an impartial administration of justice; and upon this subject they quote

being an inhabitant of Leicester, who shall, directly, or indirectly, purchase any goods, or merchandize, of John Barnard, James and Patrick McMasters, John Mein, Anne and Elizabeth Cummings, all of Boston, Henry Barnet, of Marlborough, Dunkin & Campbell, of Worcester, or any other person who imports goods from Great Britain, or shop keeper who purchases goods of an importer, contrary to the agreement entered into by the merchants of Boston, such persons, so offending, shall be deemed enemies to America, and as such, shall be recorded in the town's book of records."

This was from the pen of Col. William Henshaw, and was signed by twenty eight persons, among whom were Nathan Sargent, David Henshaw, John Southgate, Thomas Newhall, &c.

In May, 1770, a company of forty six men, from this town, formed themselves into a body, for the purpose of learning the manual exercise, drill, &c. of the soldier. They elected Wm. Henshaw their Captain, Seth Washburn, Lieutenant, and Samuel Denny, Ensign; and so intent were they upon becoming properly instructed in these essential qualifications of soldiers, that they devoted certain afternoons in each week for the purpose, and punctually attended to the duty, although the season of the year seemed to require their constant attention to their farms. Five only of the company yet survive: Benjamin Watson, William Watson, Marmaduke Earle, Abner Dunbar, and Jonathan Hubbard.

freely, from a popular and patriotic work of the day, whose author is not given. They urge a petition to the King, in hopes of success, as the Earl of Hillsborough had then been dismissed from the ministry and a nobleman friendly to the colonies succeeded him. They, at the same time, recommended an intercourse with the other colonies "as we are embarked in a common cause." "In fine, when we reflect upon the evils our forefathers underwent in the settlement of this country, the dangers to which they stood continually exposed from an insidious and blood thirsty foe, and the blood and treasure they expended, we think ourselves justly entitled to all the calamities an envious despot can heap upon us, should we tamely and pusillanimously suffer the execution of them," (the laws respecting the colonies.) "It would be despising the bounties of our creator; an infamous prostitution of ourselves, and a total disregard to posterity."

We do not feel at liberty, in the space allotted us, to make extracts from all the resolutions which were passed by the inhabitants of this town: for there was not a year elapsed, in which they did not express a sense of their grievances, and that with a degree of determination, constantly gaining strength and boldness, as the struggle progressed. We cannot forbear adding a few more extracts, to those we have already given.

In 1773, the town again chose Thomas Denny their Representative, and, among other instructions to him, recommend a standing committee of correspondence, as suggested by the House of Burgesses of Virginia, and enjoin upon him an effort to put an end to slavery and the slave trade in this province. In December, of the same year, they expressed their feelings upon the continued encroachments of the Crown, and denounced the levy of duties on imported articles, pledging themselves to oppose, to the utmost of their power, and at the hazard of their lives, any imposition unconstitutionally laid upon them. They, at the same time, resolved that they would not use any tea, "while loaded with a *tribute*, contrary to their consent," and that, whoever shall use "that destructive herb," shall be deemed inimical to his country, as endeavoring to counteract the doings of those, who were zealous for its wellfare. A resolution of thanks to Boston, was voted. A committee of fourteen was appointed, to examine as to the use of tea in town, and to report the names of those who made use of it. And a copy of these resolutions was sent to the committee of correspondence in Boston.

In May, 1774, after the harbor of Boston had been blocked up, by order of the British Parliament, a circular letter was received from Boston, to which the town immediately replied, expressing a spirit of becoming indignation at such an act of tyranny, and assured the Bostonians of the readiness of the people of this town to stand by them in their distress. "The cause," say they, "is interesting to all America, and all America must be convinced of this great truth, that by uniting, we shall stand."

The Court of Sessions of this county, this year, had made an address to the Governor, in which they reflected, with great severity, upon the conduct of the friends of liberty, calling their meetings, mutinous and tumultuous. This, immediately, in July, brought the inhabitants of this town together, and in a series of spirited resolutions, they expressed the feelings which that address had excited. They lamented the melancholy state of affairs, and, after stating that "their meeting was not holden riotously, tumultuously, and seditiously, but soberly and seriously, as men, as freemen, and as christians," they recapitulated their rights under the charters of Charles, and William and Mary, "to the end that posterity may know what our claims are, and to what struggles we are called in defence of them." They then resolved, "that any power that shall attempt to nullify, or destroy said charter, in the whole, or in part, put, itself into a *state of war* with the Province:" that they would, "even to the risque of their lives and fortunes, support and maintain the execution of the laws of this Province, as established by the charter and Legislature thereof:" that they would not purchase any goods imported from England, after the 31st of August, then next, nor purchase of any importer, any goods, until the harbor of Boston be opened and the tea duty taken off:" and that "it is the duty of all of the age of discretion, to inform themselves of their rights as men, as members of society, and by the English constitution." In addition to these, which are but a part of a series of the resolutions then passed, they deny the assertions contained in the address of the Court, and condemn, in the strongest terms. A covenant not to purchase goods imported from England, had, before this time, been signed by many in town, and a committee was appointed to present this covenant to all persons who had not already signed it. This, it will be recollected, was in July, 1774: in September, of the same year, the town met, and voted, to mount their cannon, and directed the selectmen to attend to all those not provided with fire arms. They also voted, that all differences between individuals should be settled by reference.

The General Court was ordered to be convened at Salem, in October of the same year, and Thomas Denny was again chosen to represent this town. He was instructed to refuse to be sworn by any person, except such as might be appointed according to the charter; and by no means to be sworn by the Lieutenant Governor, "who has taken the oaths as counsellor by mandamus from the King:" nor to act with the council appointed by mandamus: and that he should refuse to adjourn to Boston while garrisoned by troops: if any thing impeded their acting at Salem, he was directed to repair to Concord, and join the Provincial Congress, to be convened there on the second Tuesday of October. At a subsequent meeting, they concluded not to send any other member to the Congress than Col. Denny, and in their instructions to him, in that capacity, they directed him to endeavor to have the militia put upon the most respectable footing: to provide cannon for each town; "for we know not, say they, how soon we may be called to action:" that the Treasury be removed from Boston; to enquire why Boston neck and common is entrenched, and to cause the fortifications to be demolished; that the daily loss sustained by that town be estimated, and that the non-consumption covenant be religiously observed; a proper intercourse kept up with the other colonies, and Canada, and Nova Scotia, in order to unite them. He is also directed, "to endeavor that those *contumacious* persons who have endeavored to subvert the government, by being sworn, and acting as counsellors by mandamus, be apprehended, and held to trial;" and that a day of thanksgiving and prayer be set apart to God, for his goodness the past year in discovering the machinations of their enemies, and for the bounties of his Providence. Col. Denny attended this Congress, but was taken sick at Cambridge, where it was sitting, returned to Leicester, and Col. Joseph Henshaw was chosen to supply his place. In the same year, in November, the town procured one barrel of powder, and four hundred weight of balls, for their cannon, and appointed a committee "to supply those who might be called to march in defence of their rights, with provisions."* In December, a committee was chosen, to carry into ef-

* Resolutions, expressing the feelings that then actuated every class, were formed, to aid the general cause. At a meeting of the Blacksmiths of the County of Worcester, holden at Worcester, on the 8th of November, 1774, at which Ross Wyman was chairman, and Timothy Bigelow was clerk, they resolved not to work for any persons whom they esteemed enemies to their country, from and after the first day of the next December. These were the Tories, counsellors by mandamus who had not resigned, every one who publicly addressed Gov. Hutchinson at his departure from the province, and

fect the resolves of the Continental and Provincial Congresses, the only law givers they then acknowledged. This committee consisted of Col. Joseph Henshaw, Hezekiah Ward, Esq. Capt. Jonathan Newhall, Joseph Sargent, Seth Washburn, Samuel Denny, Thomas Newhall, and Samuel Green. The town appointed men to manage their cannon, and voted to have a contribution taken up, for the benefit of the poor in the town of Boston. The Provincial Congress had recommended to the several towns, to withhold the amount of their annual taxes from Harrison Gray, who was the State Treasurer under the royal government, before the commencement of the difficulties in the colonies, and was still Treasurer; and that they should pay them over to Henry Gardiner, Esq. of Stow, as the Treasurer for the province. With this recommendation, the town complied, and directed the amount of their taxes to be paid accordingly.* The militia of the town were called together, and a company of minute men drafted, who were to be ready to march whenever occasion required, at the shortest notice. Each soldier signed articles of enlistment, prepared by a committee of the town. This company was put under the command of Capt. Seth Washburn.

Col. Joseph Henshaw was again chosen representative to the Provincial Congress, in 1775, and urgently enjoined to procure that body to assume the powers of government, to prevent that anarchy and ruin with which the state was threatened. This was, indeed, a dark and trying hour. The arm of civil power had been unnerved. The same acts that resisted the tyranny of the mother government, annihilated the salutary restraint of those laws which had been enacted, for there was no power to execute them. It seemed as if the land was to become a prey to the abandoned and unprincipled. But there was found to be a redeeming power in the land; a power before which the wicked trembled, and the

every person exercising authority to carry into execution any of the oppressive acts of Parliament. It was particularly resolved, that they would do no work for Timothy Ruggles, of Hardwick, John Murray, of Rutland, and James Putnam, of Worcester, Esq's. nor for any one in their employment. They also refused to work for all who had not signed the "non-consumption covenant," as it was called, and not only these, but every one, who should work for, or be employed by these interdicted persons. And in addition to their own resolutions, which they printed, they called upon all denominations of artificers to form similar associations and agreements. To these resolutions the names of forty three were affixed, among which was that of Seth Washburn, from Leicester.

* Mr. Gardiner was, afterwards, the first State Treasurer under the constitution of 1780.

strong bowed ; the force of public and patriotic feeling was sufficient to check all disorders. At the meeting, in December, 1774, the town voted to aid the civil officers in arresting and securing riotous and disorderly persons, thus giving to the officers of justice the aid of public opinion, the most powerful of all supports.

In January succeeding, (1775) the town voted a bounty to each minute man, and, if called to march, (as they express an opinion they will be, before May then next,) to be allowed "the province pay," and they provided them all with ball pouches. All who were engaged in the province service were exempt from taxation, and yet, amidst all these fearful notes of preparation, though an attempt was made to suspend the schools and repairs to the highways, the town refused to suspend them. For the first six months of the year, they were represented in the Provincial Congress, by Deac. Oliver Watson, of Spencer, (then forming a district of Leicester, for the purposes of representation) : for the remainder of the year, they were represented by Hezekiah Ward, Esq. In 1776, they chose Seth Washburn, to represent them in the General Assembly, and instructed him, by no means to consent to stopping the passage into Boston harbor, as had been proposed by the former Assembly, to prevent the enemy again coming into port, because it would tend to ruin the trade of Boston entirely. For some time before the declaration of Independence, by the Congress of 1776, had been made, the policy of that measure had been freely discussed, and advocated, or condemned, according to the hopes and wishes of the disputants. A meeting was had, in May, 1776, the 22d day of the month, in this town, for the express purpose of seeing if the town would uphold Congress in declaring the colonies independent of Great Britain, when they unanimously voted "that in case the Hon. the Continental Congress should declare the colonies independent of Great Britain, they would support said Congress in effectuating such a measure at the *risque of their lives and fortunes.*" And when, in July, this declaration was received, it was read, agreeably to the order of Council, in church, by the minister, the first Lord's day after receiving it, and was recorded, in a fair legible hand, at full length, in the records of the town. The Hon. Joseph Allen, now of Worcester, was then their clerk. He had taken an active part in all the transactions of the day ; and, if we mistake not, some of the most spirited and interesting papers upon the records of the town were the production of his pen.*

* We regret that we are not able to trace each of these to their proper

But it was not by resolutions and instructions, however spirited, alone, that the people of this town showed their adherence to the cause of liberty. They made many and great sacrifices of their wealth, their ease, and comfort, and of lives too. We feel safe in affirming, that they promptly answered every call for men, or money, or provisions, during the war of the Revolution. Every quota of men was fully furnished, and, in many cases, this became extremely burdensome, since the first who enlisted into the Continental Army, instead of enlisting for three years, entered the Army "during the war," and it was with difficulty, and great expense, that the drafts of three and eight month's men were filled, because so many of the young men were already in the Army. When the trumpet of war was first sounded at Lexington, a company of men belonging to Leicester and Spencer, marched, without delay, to the scene of action, and subsequently took an honorable part in the battle on Bunker Hill. This company was commanded by Capt. Seth Washburn, whose Lieutenant was Joseph Livermore, of Spencer, and Ensign Loring Lincoln, of Leicester. There are yet six survivors of that company, and from them we have learned some of the particulars of their marching from here, and the services they performed. The officers of the company, besides those mentioned, were Peleg Hersey, John Brown, Anthony Sprague and William Crossman, Sergeants: Jason Livermore, Hezekiah Saunders, Daniel Hubbard, and Elijah Southgate, Corporals. The company was attached to the Regiment commanded by Col. Jonathan Ward, of Southborough, Lieut. Col. Barnes of Marlborough, and Maj. Timothy Bigelow, of Worcester. The news of the engagement at Lexington, arrived here, about noon of the next day. The men, constituting the company of minute-men, were then engaged upon their respective farms, and messengers were dispatched to collect them. Not a moment of delay was made on their part; the plough was left in the furrow; they scarce took time to bid adieu to their families, and in a few hours were mustered upon the common in Leicester, and were soon on their march. Many anecdotes are related of the march of this company, that would have done honor to the days of Roman or Spartan virtue. It was truly a trying hour. It was the first time that the sound of war had been heard in their own borders for almost the life of a generation, and the fearful odds in which they were authors. One of them, at least, we believe to have been from the pen of Col. Thomas Denny; some, from that of Col. William Henshaw; some, from that of Joseph Henshaw, and several, if we mistake not, from the pen of Mr. Allen.

to be engaged, naturally led to the most gloomy forebodings. The mother of the commander of the company, was overwhelmed with grief and apprehension at the departure of her son; but he, in no way agitated, bade her a cheerful farewell; "pray for me," said he as he left her, "and I will fight for you." One of the company, was the son of Mr. Nathan Sargent. He found it impossible to furnish himself with lead for musket balls, and to supply this defect, his father directed his son to melt down the weights of a valuable clock that was then keeping time, which was at once done, and most of the company supplied from this source. The company marched a short time before sun down, and continued their advance during the night to Marlborough, and, after halting to refresh, continued their march to Watertown, where, learning there was no immediate need of their services, they halted. They were afterwards stationed in Fort No. 2, as it was called, a little north of the dwelling house of the late Chief Justice Dana. On the 17th June, the Col. of the Regiment was absent, and it was commanded by Lt. Col. Barnes. The Regiment left the camp, on that day, about noon, and halted some time at Lechmere Point,—the reason for which is not known. As the Regiment came to the foot of Bunker Hill, it was met by the famous Dr. Church, of Boston, who, for so long a time, acted the double part of seeming patriot and actual traitor, who informed the commander, that orders were sent to stop any more troops going on to the field, and the Regiment halted. Capt. Washburn, overhearing these orders, exclaimed in a loud voice, that they were "tory orders," and turning to his company, asked which of them would follow him. Every man of them marched from the line, and followed him into the action. The Regiment thus broken, was not again collected during the day. This company came into the engagement about a quarter of an hour before a retreat was ordered. They took post at the rail fence nearest the redoubt, and were engaged until the whole American line retreated. No one of the company was killed, although all, except two,* were in the action. Capt. Washburn received a ball in his cartouch box, four passed through his coat, and one through his wig. Mr. Brown was badly wounded in the foot; a private of the name of Ward, was wounded in the arm; and Mr. Crossman was also wounded. When the Americans were retreating, a ball struck the cord that supported the canteen of Mr. Isaac Livermore, and cut it off: but he was too

* These were Mathew Johnson and Joseph Washburn, son of the commander, who were detached on the morning of the 17th for guard duty.

careful of his possessions thus to lose a quantity of eau-de-vie that it contained, and turning round, returned amidst a shower of balls, picked up the treasure and brought it off safe. When on the march to the hill, Capt. Washburn gave leave to any one who felt disinclined to go, to return, but no one availed himself of this license. Col. Barnes was tried by a Court Martial for his conduct that day, but, from some palliating circumstances, was acquitted.

We have been the more particular in our account of this company of men, as it was the first raised in the town which we are describing, and these, and other anecdotes connected with the Battle of the 17th June, 1775, are attested by living witnesses.*

Besides those we have named as having marched from this town, who took part in the battle of the 17th June, 1775, there are others still residing here, who were also actors in that glorious day. Mr. Caleb Barton and Capt. John Holden, who afterwards served as an officer during the war of the revolution, are the persons to whom we allude. There was residing here, till within a few years, a black man, who, we have good reason to believe, was the one who shot Maj. Pitcairn, whose death forms so affecting an incident in that bloody affray. History relates that he was shot by a negro, and from the story of the one we allude to, and many corroborating circumstances, we are led to conclude that he was the person who did the deed. The person to whom we refer was named Peter Salem; he was a servant of Gen. Nixon during the revolution, was a native of Framingham, and removed here a few years since, where he died. Major Pitcairn was shot as he was mounting the redoubt, and fell into the arms of his son. His loss was a severe one to the British, and added not a little to their regret at the events of that day.

In April, 1776, the town of Leicester, agreeably to a resolve of the General Assembly, raised a sum of money to purchase ammunition and entrenching tools, and the same year raised a sum of money to pay for transporting the provisions to Watertown the year before, which they had furnished for the army. The poll taxes of all from this town who were in the continental army, were abated by the town, and the families of these soldiers were taken care of, and provided with whatever their necessities required, at the expense of their fellow citizens. In 1778, the sum of £30, of the then

* The names of the survivors are, Nathan Craige, Thomas Sprague, of Spencer, Isaac Livermore and Mathew Jackson, of Leicester, Daniel Hubbard formerly of Leicester, but now of Wallingford, Vt. and Elias Green.

currency, was voted to every continental soldier raised in this town, and a committee appointed to estimate the services performed by each citizen in the war, to which committee each man rendered an account, as well of the money paid by him, as of the services he had rendered, for the purpose of equalizing the burthens among the inhabitants. In 1779, the town raised £1000 for the payment of enlisted men for the ensuing year, and appointed a committee to employ men for this purpose, whenever they should be needed to supply the drafts upon the town. In the same year, they raised £4000, to pay the soldiers they had hired, and the contingent expenses attendant upon the same, and in a few months added £500 to this grant. In 1780, £5000 were, at first, raised for the pay of the soldiers, and in July, upwards of £22,000 were raised, one half to employ soldiers, and the other half to pay their "six months' men," then in the army. They, at the same time, voted one hundred and ten bushels of corn to every soldier who should march from this town, and in November of the same year, £60,000 were granted, to pay the soldiers for their services. These sums must have been enormous for a town of the size and wealth of this, at that time, even after reducing them by the depreciated value of the currency, which, as appears by the records of the town, was in the ratio of 40 to 1.*

These were not all the sums raised during this year by the town. Frequent calls for Beef were made upon them for the supply of the army, and in 1780, they raised £200 of the "new money," to comply with one of these calls, and the next year, £80 in silver, were appropriated for the same purpose. These sacrifices did not, by any means, embrace all that the inhabitants were called upon to make. The inhabitants were divided into classes, which, in 1780, consisted of ten, and whenever detachments of soldiers were called for, it was the duty of the respective classes to furnish their proportionate number, either from themselves, or by hiring substitutes. The bounties paid, for this purpose, were often large and burdensome in the extreme. A sum as high as \$300 was, in some instances, paid to induce individuals to enlist. And these sums form no part of the computation of the foregoing sums. The classes, not only were obliged to go into the neighboring towns to procure their quotas, but, in some instances, sent as far as New York to hire

* We may judge somewhat of the value of the money, from a vote passed in 1780, "to pay Capt. Leviston £3 15s. for a horse to go to the taking of Burgoyne."

those men to enlist whose terms were expiring. The frequency of the drafts, and the length of the time for which those who first enlisted were holden, drew, in turn, almost every young man in town into the "service," at one time or other. The amount raised at different times, even in this town, now seems to be incredible, and we should almost apprehend some mistake in the matter, if we were not assured of the truth of the records by some who are living witnesses of the sufferings and privations of our fathers in the struggle. We are assured, by a gentleman of high standing and reputation, that his father, who was a respectable farmer in that day, was, more than once, compelled to dispose of portions of the neat stock from his farm, for the purpose of promptly meeting the payment of his proportion of the public taxes. Nor was this a solitary instance. -

But we do not mention these instances of voluntary sacrifices, as evidence of any *peculiar* devotedness in this people to the cause of patriotism. They probably did no more, in proportion to their ability, than other towns around them. But a detail of these burdens and sacrifices is enough, without a single comment, to fix the character of the town for patriotism and public spirit. They have been enough too, we trust, to show, that the spirit of this people did not expend itself in idle resolutions, in favor of rights which they shrunk from defending in the hour of danger.

It must strike every one with some surprise, that, during the suspension of all judicial and executive authority in the state, the great mass of the people should have been kept quiet and orderly. It was truly a moral spectacle; it was a nation bursting the bands in which they had been bound, and ruling and governing themselves in an orderly and peaceable manner. The force of public opinion, at any time great, was then irresistible. The recommendations of Congress were law, and the committee of safety saw that the laws were executed, against whom no one dare rebel. In this, they were fully countenanced by the people, who, in their frequent meetings and discussions of national affairs, became convinced, that union and order were necessary to their existence as a people, and they had virtue enough to guard these most sacredly. Many of the votes upon these subjects we have already mentioned; others are upon the records, a few of which we would add. In 1777, a committee was appointed, to ascertain who were unfriendly to the government, and report their names to the general sessions of the Peace, and one man was *voted* by the town to be of that class, and

reported accordingly. The committees of safety and correspondence in towns, were usually constituted of the most influential citizens, whose number and character were sure to carry respect. In 1777, this committee here, consisted of Col. Joseph Henshaw, John Fletcher, Benjamin Richardson, James Baldwin, Jr., Isaac Green, Phinehas Newhall, and William Henshaw, and in subsequent years was enlarged in numbers.

In 1776, the inhabitants of this town opposed the attempt made by the legislature, to have the people form a constitution of government, because so many, whose voice should be heard in so important a question, were then absent in the service of their country. But when the proposal was made in 1779, they unanimously voted to instruct their representative to vote for a convention to form such a constitution. Seth Washburn and William Henshaw were the delegates in that convention from Leicester. When the constitution was presented to the people for their acceptance, the inhabitants of this town, at a meeting, held June 1, 1780, acted upon each of its articles separately, and adopted them almost unanimously, except the 3d article in the Bill of Rights, and some modification of one or two other articles, and voted, that if these corrections could not be effected, to accept of the same as it was presented to them, and directed their delegates to act accordingly. Col. Seth Washburn was chosen the first representative under the Constitution, and the votes for Governor, at the first election, were, 69 for John Hancock, 2 for James Bowdoin, and 1 for James Sullivan.

From the peace of 1783 till the commencement of the difficulties in 1786, nothing of particular interest occurred, deserving a place here. The town partook of the excitement of that period, and in the year 1786, chose their delegates to represent them in a county convention, to whom they detailed the grievances which they wished to have remedied. The convention sat in this town, and the delegates chosen were David Henshaw, Esq. and the late Col. Thomas Denny. They were both decided friends of the government, and possessed firmness of character together with great acuteness; and when, at length, the convention met, they so disconcerted the measures of those unfriendly to the government, that, after an ineffectual attempt to carry them through, the convention rose, and their meeting was dissolved without having effected any thing. The town also instructed their representative at the General Court, upon the subject of the real grievances under which

they were suffering, and which they wished to have redressed, but charged him by no means to agree to any change in the constitution of government. They had ever been opposed to the "tender act," as unconstitutional, and they now directed their representative to oppose its passing, when it should be acted upon by the legislature. This direct interference of the people with the State legislation, by means of instructions to their representatives, having been long discontinued, it is rather a subject of curiosity, in reading them now, to see how many of the general topics that would be likely to come under the notice of the legislature, were embraced within their scope. If representatives held themselves bound by their instructions, there was hardly a subject of interest that could arise, upon which they were not ready to act at once. This was literally the government of the people. The town were as prompt in acting upon subjects affecting the whole nation, as upon those of local interest alone. And when the subject of the confederacy of the colonies, in 1778, was proposed to them, they unanimously approved of the measure, and directed their representative "to aid it by all that lay in his power." Indeed, there was a surprising unanimity in all their proceedings during this dark and portentous era of our history. They were, undoubtedly, influenced in their measures by a few patriotic, public spirited men, who had most ardently engaged in the cause of liberty, and who had, withal, judgment and sagacity enough "to guide the whirlwind and direct the storm" of public feeling, so as to secure the independence of the country and the good of posterity. Some of these we have already named, but we are conscious that we cannot do them justice. The private histories of those men, and the anecdotes connected with them, illustrative of their characters and the character of the times in which they lived, have been forgotten, and but little can now be recalled. Those were days in which the individual character of every man was known and tried. A man must be for or against the existing government. In 1778, a list of every man in town, of the age of 21 years, and upwards, was made out, and each one called upon to take the oath of allegiance to the State, and those who should refuse were to be reported to the town. But, we believe, few, if any, had the hardihood to refuse to take the oath at that stage of the war. They would hardly have risked the danger of popular power, when the people was the only power to which they could have appealed for protection against the sanction of such a call.

In the year 1787, the troubles by which the State had been distracted, had, in a slight degree, subsided, and so many of their own population, as well as of the inhabitants of almost every town, had been involved in that disastrous train of events, known as the "Shays war," that the town instructed their representative to vote for the pardon of the insurgents, and to endeavor to redress the grievances under which the people labored; among which they reckoned the unequal tax upon real and personal estate, the tax on polls, and the undue influence of Boston on the legislature, so long as it should continue to meet there.

Several persons were involved in that unhappy insurrection, whose names have either been forgotten, or we suppress them, from charity to their memories. Their efforts here, were always thwarted by the firmness of the "government men," who were unwearied in their efforts to quell the spirit of rebellion. Many anecdotes are told of the firmness of the friends of the government under circumstances the most trying and alarming. They showed no disposition to compromise the dignity and interests of the State. Early in the winter of 1786, which was a severe one, Day, one of the insurgent captains, having been towards Boston upon business connected with the rebellion, was returning through Leicester, on a very severe day, and immediately after a violent snow-storm that rendered the roads almost impassable. He was on horseback, and stopped at the dwelling house of Mr. Nathan Sargent, near the Worcester line, to warm him, and entered the house without ceremony. He laid his sword and hat upon a table, and taking a chair, observed that he was going to warm him. "Not until I know who you are," said Mr. Sargent, who had silently witnessed his abrupt entrance and conduct, "for these are suspicious times, and I must know who I entertain." Day, finding him resolute, assumed as much dignity and importance as possible, and announced himself as "*Captain Day*." "Then get out of my house," said Mr. Sargent, and seizing his hat and sword, threw them into a snow bank, and drove Day out after them, who swore that "vengeance should light on him in less than a fortnight."

A few persons, taking advantage of the popular excitement, during the time of the insurrection, were chosen to offices of profit and trust from the Insurgent party; but they almost invariably became satisfied of their error, as soon as, by intercourse with intelligent patriots, they saw the dangerous tendency of their measures. We cannot, at this day, realize the horrors of the civil war that

then threatened, and, in many places, actually distracted the State. A house was literally divided against itself. The sound of arms was heard in every village, and those who encountered each other in hostile array, were often of the same household, or the same social circle. Neither sex nor age were exempt from the angry passions that prompted these warlike preparations. The women were, if possible, more clamorous than the men, whenever they took part with the insurgents; though we might record many honorable instances, where wives remained firm in their attachment to government, while their husbands were ready to go all lengths to shake off the wholesome restraints of that power.

It was customary, for the friends of government to wear a fillet of white paper in their hats, while the adherents of the opposite party adopted, as a badge of distinction, a sprig of evergreen. But, fortunately for the country, the evergreen, in the language of one in that day, soon withered; the arm of power scattered the insurgent forces, and the miserable and misguided adherents of Day, and Shays, and Wheeler, and Parsons were glad to sue for mercy to that power, which they had so lately risen up to crush. And their suit was not vain; policy, as well as a predisposition to clemency, spared their lives, and they were suffered to return to their homes in peace, though very much to the chagrin and mortification of many, whose excited passions called for a sacrifice of expiation for the political sins of their adversaries.

The insurrection of 1786 is rather a matter of state history, than that of any particular town. Many are alive who took part with the forces sent out by the government to quell the rebellion, and though they encountered great hardships and fatigue, and, at times, no inconsiderable degree of danger, we doubt whether they would desire to be crowned with laurels, although they were conquerors, or wish us to publish their names to the world as soldiers, on account of their feats of arms in that contest with their misguided brethren. It is not so long since those events occurred, that they, or those engaged in them, are forgotten. Many remember the scenes of uproar and confusion, into which the hitherto peaceable dwellings of the citizens were then thrown, by being made the quarters for the soldiery; and they remember too, the anxiety they felt at the apprehended attacks from the exasperated insurgents. Those, however, whose reason returned as their passions subsided, became convinced of their follies and their criminality, and many of them became the firmest supporters of the government. We,

perhaps, have dwelt too long upon this subject, but our remarks, though general in their terms, apply so well to the state of this town for several years, that they may be considered as its history, unless we should go so minutely into the investigation of the subject as to name the actors in the scenes, which, for reasons we have offered, we forbear to do.

In 1787, the Federal Constitution was presented to the states for their approbation, and a convention of Delegates from the several towns in Massachusetts was called, to meet at Boston, on the second Wednesday of January, 1788, to act upon its adoption, and Colonel Samuel Denny was chosen the delegate from Leicester. The constitution having been accepted, an election of officers under it was had, and the votes in this town were, 38 for Hon. Moses Gill for Representative in Congress, and 20 for Mr. Gill, and 19 for Gen. Artemas Ward, for elector of President.

We are now approaching, in chronological order, those events, that have too lately occurred, either to require, or justify, a detail of them. Indeed, no event connected with any important series, that we are aware of, has occurred, since the adoption of the Federal constitution, in this town. Events, however, to which no particular interest is attached now, may acquire importance at a future day, and their history be eagerly sought after. If we had foresight enough to distinguish these, we certainly would cheerfully record them here, if for no other reason than to save the future historian the many hour's labor of gathering them from the musty pages of a town record book. In 1794, minute men were raised, and a bounty paid them. But it was upon the ocean alone that our laurels were reaped in that war, and the "Oxford Army" borrowed little lustre from the achievements of Truxton and his associates.

We happily live at a time when men can look back upon the days of party excitement and animosities, that disturbed the tranquillity of the country, with feelings, if not of regret, certainly of surprise, at their violence and long duration. It is not within the scope of our plan, even if our inclinations prompted it, to trace the rise of the two political parties, which, for nearly thirty years, divided the public opinion in the United States. This town had its share of this excitement, though the degree of acrimony fell far short of that in many. They voted resolutions condemning the embargo, in 1808, and petitioning the President, (Jefferson) to take off the same. In 1812, they passed resolutions, condemning the then existing war with Great Britain, and chose a delegate to meet

a County convention to consult on measures of public policy. That party denominated Federalists were the most numerous in the town, while that distinctive title was borne by any party, though when in the plenitude of their strength they ever used their power in a liberal manner, and extended equal courtesy to their political opponents.

The growth and improvement of Leicester, as we have already observed, has been constant though gradual. The refinement in taste that has been effected in many parts of New England has not been entirely inoperative here. The growth of the village here has been so rapid, that individuals recollect the time, when from four to six houses were all that were erected in the village, where now there are nearly forty, besides the public buildings and others in progress of erection. The style of architecture is neat, and although the village can boast of no palace, it is not disfigured with one tenement that indicates poverty or want. There have been many improvements proposed, and so far as unanimity in design can promise success, they will be carried into effect, by which this village may vie with any in the country for beauty and neatness. A Bank, as we have already stated, was chartered and located in this town in the winter of 1826, and when, as is proposed, the building for that institution shall have been erected, and the congregational meeting house removed, so as to enlarge the common before it, and produce a proper symmetry in relation to the Academy, Leicester may boast of attractions in her scenery, her public improvements, enterprize and wealth, which all will be ready to acknowledge.

The situation of the town is healthy, and epidemics of a dangerous character have seldom prevailed. The average number of deaths, annually, may be reckoned at about fifteen, which will bear no fair proportion to the annual births. The population of the town has annually furnished emigrants to other towns, and other States, and there is scarcely a State in the Union that has not among its citizens natives of this town.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

We are aware that we have omitted the names of many in the foregoing sketches, which a sense of justice would require us to have inserted. Nothing but an inability to do any justice to them has debarred us from the pleasure of recording them. A few, however, whose histories we have been able to obtain, we feel ourselves warranted in noticing.

SETH WASHBURN.

Among those who acted a pretty important part in the events of our history, was the Hon. Seth Washburn, Esquire, whose name we have more than once had occasion to mention. He was a native of Bridgewater, and a lineal descendant of John Washburn, who was one of the original proprietors and settlers of that town. He was a native of England, and arrived in New England within a few years after the settlement of Plymouth:* He died in Bridgewater, in 1670. Seth Washburn, the subject of this memoir, was great grandson of John Washburn. He removed to Leicester some time previous to the year 1750, but the precise time is not known. Though destitute of a good education, he successively held almost every office in the gift of the people of the town, and was a member of the Senate from this County during the years 1780, 1783, '84, '85, '86, and '87, in which body he is said to have possessed a very considerable influence. He was a firm patriot and a most unwavering and decided supporter of the rights of the Colonies. After his return from the service which we have spoken of, in 1775, he acted as "muster master" during the war, and aided the prosecution of it by every means in his power—though we do not know that he was, for any considerable time afterwards, in the service. He had been a soldier in the French war previous to 1749, and was ever esteemed a man of great courage and self possession. This was particularly observed in the engagement on Bunker Hill. Although he came late into the action, and the British were then on the point of forcing the redoubt and lines, and the Americans, after having expended their ammunition, were almost at the mercy of their exasperated foe, he showed no agitation, but delivered his commands with the utmost coolness and decision. He had a good deal of native eloquence, and whenever he addressed any body of men it was with propriety and effect. His business in life was that of a blacksmith until he became engaged in public affairs. He was distinguished for his piety and the urbanity of his manners. During the insurrection in 1786, he was a decided friend of the Government, and influential in checking the spirit that then prevailed inimical to the wholesome restraints of the laws. He died at the age of 70, in the year 1794, leaving two sons, one of whom, Joseph Washburn, was a member of the com-

* Whether he was the John Washburn who was Secretary of the Massachusetts Company, in London, in 1629, we have not been able to ascertain; but from the name, and the time of his removal to New England, we presume he may have been the same.

pany which marched to Cambridge, in 1775, and he afterwards served during the war of the revolution, having received, during his service, the commissions of Ensign and Lieutenant in the Continental service. After his return to Leicester from the army, he continued to reside there till his death in 1807. The other son of Seth Washburn now resides in Putney, Vermont.

THOMAS NEWHALL.

The name of Capt. Thomas Newhall, deserves a place among those distinguished for their usefulness and public spirit. His life presents but few incidents out of which to swell a biographical sketch, for it was passed in the peaceful retirement of his farm and his native town. He was not, however, inactive there. He possessed a vigorous mind and employed its powers for the public good, and, so far as his influence could extend, for the good of his country. He was a native of Leicester, and was born in 1732, and died in 1814, at the age of 82 years. We have already noticed his munificence to the Academy in this town, and we cannot better conclude this brief notice than by transcribing the judicious epitaph upon his tomb stone.

“Generous and patriotic through life : at an advanced age, he became a liberal benefactor of the inhabitants of this town, and to the literary institution established therein, of which he was one of the first trustees.”

He left at his death a very considerable estate, but left no children.

THOMAS DENNY.

Another patriotic gentleman whose name we have mentioned, and who deserves a particular notice, was Thomas Denny, Esq. He was a man of uncommonly vigorous mind, and commanded great influence and respect, at a time, when talents and integrity rather than wealth or family, were the tests of merit. He was the son of Daniel Denny, whose name we have mentioned as one of the earliest settlers of the town, and was born in the year 1724.

He took a leading part in the affairs of the town early in life, and ever afterwards retained and increased his influence among those who best knew him. Some of the resolutions adopted by the town in regard to the aggressions of the mother Country, were, as we have already stated, the productions of his pen, and show, by their style and language, an education above that of many of his contemporaries. He often represented the town in the General Court, during the difficult sessions of that body, before the revolution,

when they were constantly embroiled in contests with the representatives of the Royal Government. As an evidence of the confidence placed in him by his constituents, he was the only member chosen from this town to attend the Provincial Congress at Concord, in 1774. In this body he was one of the most useful and active members, and scarcely any one was listened to with more attention and respect in the debates of the assembly. After that Congress was adjourned to Cambridge, he was taken ill, and returned to Leicester, where he died, Oct. 23, 1774, at the age of 49. His death was a subject of deep regret to all who knew his worth. Had he lived, he must have taken a leading part in the events of the Revolution, in the incipient stages of which he had so decided an interest. He held the office of Colonel of the regiment of Militia, in the limits of which he resided, which was *then* an honorable mark of distinguished merit.

In connexion with him, we ought to mention his brother, COL. SAMUEL DENNY, who, though he did not take so prominent a part in the transactions previous to the Revolution, was a leading man during it, and once commanded a regiment of men in the "service." He held many public offices in the town, and was a member of the Convention in 1788 that accepted the Constitution of the United States. He died in 1817, at the age of 86 years. Col. Thomas Denny left three children at his death. His son, bearing the same name, was a highly respectable and influential man during his life. He died Dec. 11, 1815. He was, at the time of his death, a member of the Board of Trustees of Leicester Academy, and often during his life represented the town in the General Court, and was, at that time, the wealthiest man in the town.

Col. Samuel Denny left five sons and three daughters. Three of his sons are yet living, viz. Nathaniel Paine, William, and Samuel.

WILLIAM HENSHAW.

Another individual who deserves honorable notice in this place is the late Col. William Henshaw. His biography deserves an abler pen, and a more complete detail than we have been able to give. He was the son of Daniel Henshaw, who was an early proprietor of Leicester, and removed there in the year 1748, from Boston, where he had till then resided. William, the subject of this memoir, was born in Boston, Sept. 30, 1735, and removed with his father to Leicester. His opportunities, till his removal, for an education, had been good, but he received none from schools after that period. Yet, by his own industry and application, he acquired

a very good English education, and some knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages. After his removal to Leicester, his time was mostly employed upon a farm. In 1759, he went, as a Lieutenant, into the service against the French and Indians, and served through that eventful campaign. Having many friends in Boston, he early became acquainted with the views and feelings of the patriots and ardently engaged in the cause of liberty. Many of the resolutions and "instructions" of the people of Leicester were drawn up, as we have already stated, by Col. Henshaw and evince a good literary taste while they exhibit an extremely accurate knowledge of the events that were transpiring as well as the abstract rights of the colonies. He was a member of the jury, who, at the April term of the Superior Court, in holden at Worcester, 1774, remonstrated against Chief Justice Oliver's acting as Judge and refused to act as jurors in case he did. The remonstrance was drawn with great spirit, and was from the pen of Col. Henshaw, we believe, as a draught of it in his hand writing is among his papers. In June, 1775, he was commissioned by the Provincial Congress, Adjutant General of the forces that had been then raised. This was the first appointment to that office, of any one after the authority of the mother country was renounced. He faithfully performed the duties of this office till the arrival of Gen. Gates, at Cambridge, who had been appointed Adjutant General, by the General Congress: and he continued to perform the duties of the office till the end of the campaign, as an assistant to General Gates. On the first of January, 1776, he was commissioned by Congress as a Lieutenant Colonel of the 12th Regiment of Infantry, and was with his regiment during the campaign of 1776, in and near New York. The precise time of his discharge from the army we cannot now state. But after his return, he retired to his farm in Leicester. He often held the highest offices in the gift of his townsmen, and always, we believe, faithfully performed the duties of his station. He died, at the age of 85, in February, 1820. He retained his mental faculties till his death. A few years previous to that time, Gov. Brooks applied to him for information concerning certain questions relating to the Battle of Bunker Hill, and we transcribe his letter in return, in order to show the part he took in the transactions of that day, and to exhibit to what degree he retained the vigor of his mind at the age of 82.

"DEAR SIR—When Breed's Hill was taken possession of by our troops, I was at home. The best information of the action I had

from General Pomeroy, who was at the rail fence above the works our troops threw up. He informed me, they stuffed hay between the rails of the fence, to prevent the enemy discovering them, and ordered the soldiers to retain their fire till they advanced within six or seven rods, then gave the orders to fire, which caused them to retreat. The enemy formed and attacked them the second time, and retreated in like manner. They formed, advanced, and rushed on to the fence the third time, and obliged our troops to retreat, after they had lost a large number of their men, and Major Pitcairn at their head. The Americans went to Breed's Hill on the night of the 16th of June, the battle commenced on the 17th, and our forces returned to Cambridge. I believe there was only verbal orders given to go to Breed's Hill, and that they had neither cannon nor field pieces. Gen. Ward, the early part of May, requested Col. Gridley, Mr. Richard Devens, one of the committee of safety in Charlestown, and myself, to view the heights from the camp to Charlestown. We did so, and made a written report, as follows: viz. 1. To build a Fort on Prospect Hill. 2. To proceed to Bunker's Hill, and fortify it. 3. To Breed's Hill, and do the same. Our object was, if obliged to retire from Breed's Hill, the fort at Bunker's Hill would cover our retreat with the cannon, and drive their ships out of the rivers; also would prevent the enemy from keeping possession of Charlestown. Why the report was not approved, I cannot say—perhaps others recommended to proceed first to Charlestown. What returns I am possessed of, will send with the orderly book, which contains General Ward's orders."

Signed "Wm. Henshaw," and addressed to "His Excellency John Brooks, Esq."

Our only object is to present the outlines of a memoir, and not to eulogize, and we cannot better conclude this, than by extracting a part of an obituary notice, published at the time of his death, in the Boston Palladium.

"Few have lived so little known to the world, and few so deserving of its praise, as Col. Henshaw. His character was of that unassuming cast which shrinks from the scrutiny of observation, and is better pleased with the consciousness, than with the appearance of acting right. He was equally an object of admiration in his military and private life. He served as a Lieutenant in the French war, and as Colonel through the struggle of our revolution. He was always distinguished for his clearness in council and intrepidity in action, and we find honorable mention of him in several

histories of those times. After the Revolution, he retired to Leicester, and, entering on the business of private life, became an exemplary husband and father."

The foregoing is but an extract from the notice of his death, and we should have been glad to have transcribed in this place the tribute to his memory, which was paid at the time of his decease, by his friend, the late Gov. Brooks, but the newspaper containing it has been mislaid, and we must content ourselves with this short notice, till more leisure on our own part, or some abler pen, shall do his memory more ample justice. He was not, alone, so prominent, as to deserve notice in this place, of the sons of Daniel Henshaw. His brother, Joseph, who resided here, was equally active in all public concerns, and commanded as great influence and respect. He often represented the town in the General Court, and was, for a considerable time, chairman of the committee of safety in the county of Worcester, which was formed from the several committees of safety and correspondence of the towns.

David, another brother, though younger than the forementioned brothers, early took part in the events of the last years of the revolution, and was especially active in the events which succeeded it, having ever been a firm supporter of the Government, and a friend to good order. Both William and David Henshaw were, for many years, acting magistrates in the county, and distinguished for their intelligence and independence in performing their duties in that capacity.

Both the brothers left pretty numerous families. One of the sons of the latter is, at present, a member of the Senate of this state from the county of Suffolk.

JOSEPH ROBERTS.

In our sketches of the Ecclesiastical History of this town, we spoke of the Rev. Mr. Roberts and were unable to give any further account of him than we there stated. But we have since received a more particular account of him by the politeness of a gentleman of high respectability* which we subjoin here. The Rev. Joseph Roberts was born in Boston, at the foot of Copp's Hill, in 1720. He graduated at Cambridge in 1741, and was probably from a family in no way distinguished, as his name is found among the last of the class that graduated that year. In 1754, he was settled at Leicester and dismissed in 1762, as we have already stated. He soon af-

* Isaac Fisk, Esq. of Weston, Register of Probate for the County of Middlesex.

ter removed to Weston and occasionally preached in that and the neighboring towns. He purchased the estate about the same time upon which he resided till his death. He took an active part during the Revolution, as one of the committee of the town to enlist and provide for the soldiers. He was a member of the Convention that formed the Constitution of Massachusetts, and among his papers, after his death, was found a draught, in his own hand writing, of a frame of Government, many of the principles of which are incorporated into our present Constitution, and he is believed to have taken an active and efficient part in forming and adopting this Constitution. He was often afterwards a representative from Weston.

He became connected with a cunning and shrewd speculator in business, and, in consequence, became involved in land suits and lost a considerable part of his property. His temper thus became sour, and in the latter part of his life he became extremely avaricious. He died like a beggar and after his death there were found in his chambers several bags of money which had been hoarded up for years; as, on removing them, the bottoms of the bags were too much decayed to hold their contents. He denied himself, for many years before his death, the conveniences and even the necessities of life.

All the clothing he possessed at his death, would have disgraced the meanest beggar in the streets. Such was his love of money that he suffered himself to be committed to jail on a judgment growing out of his connexion with the speculator before mentioned, and remained in jail two or three years, till he compelled his creditor, in this way, to relinquish a part of the debt for the sake of recovering the remainder. Mr. Roberts possessed more than ordinary natural powers of mind, but they became debased by the sordidness of his disposition. He died a bachelor, at the advanced age of 91, in April, 1811.

Note to the Reader. An apology is due for presenting the foregoing sketches in so many parts imperfect. We had become pledged to furnish them within a given period, not suspecting at the time the labor of preparing them. A multiplicity of engagements, in addition to the shortness of the time for preparation, has compelled us to present these in a form less perfect than we had hoped, when we assumed the task. This apology, while it is due to the reader will, we hope, in some measure, screen from the severity of criticism.

THE WRITER.



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